The Dissertation Committee for Katharine Lynette Chamberlain Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

The Social Identification of Students Labeled Dyslexic and Learning Disabled Across Literacy Instructional Contexts

Committee:

Jo Worthy, Supervisor

Keffrelyn Brown

Beth Maloch

Ramón Martínez

Diane Schallert

The Social Identification of Students Labeled Dyslexic and Learning Disabled Across Literacy Instructional Contexts

by

Katharine Lynette Chamberlain, B. Music; M.S.Acc.; M.Ed.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2015

Dedication

I dedicate these words in memory of and as a testament to my father, a man whose example and love taught me the value of deeply understanding a subject, and that lasting accomplishments require perseverance and strength of purpose.

Acknowledgements

The journey that brought me to this accomplishment was not one I traveled alone. Without my faith in God, and the support and encouragement of my family, friends, professors, and dissertation committee members I would not have reached this destination. I am also indebted to the staff, administrators, teachers, parents, at Brushwood Elementary, and thank them for welcoming and opening their school to me, as well as sharing their students/children with me.

I am grateful to the parents of the participating students for allowing me the opportunity to understand their child's experiences at school. Their trust in me was appreciated more than I can express with words, and not something I took for granted. The opportunity to hear their children's ideas, thinking, and questions is something I will always treasure.

I would also like to thank all of the children who were students in Ms. White and Ms. Nelson's classrooms. They generously welcomed me into their community, not only as a researcher, but also as a fellow reader and writer. My reading list grew every day I was in their presence – they inspired me to read what they were reading so that I could join their book talks. These students openly shared their thinking, and freely talked about what they were reading and writing. Specifically, I want to thank a fourth grade girl for sharing her passion for *Counting by 7's*, by Holly Goldberg Sloan, and her insistence that I read it.

In this book I found the following quote,

> It's possible that all labels are curses. Unless they are on cleaning products. Because in my opinion it's not really a great idea to see people as one thing. Every person has lots of ingredients to make them into what is always a one-of-a-kind creation…If there is anything I've figured out in the last months it's that you can find labels to organize living things, but you can't put people in any kind of group or order (Willow Chance, p. 18).

These words sum up my beliefs about understanding people and my philosophy of teaching. Each human being is a "one-of-a-kind" creation and a wonder to be discovered. Over the course of the year of this study, I discovered the uniqueness of each of the students in these classrooms, and was provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of students who struggle in school.

I am grateful to all of the teachers who participated in the study, but particularly Ms. White and Ms. Nelson. They are gifted and caring educators who opened their classrooms to me for a year, and generously shared their students, teaching, and thinking with me. I am honored that I had the opportunity to learn from them, with them, and to observe two teachers who are so dedicated to meeting each of their student's academic and social needs.

I extend my sincere gratitude to my dissertation committee – Jo Worthy, Keffrelyn Brown, Beth Maloch, Ramón Martínez, and Diane Schallert, for guiding and supporting me in my development as a researcher, teacher educator, and scholar during my graduate studies and throughout this project. Each pushed me to think critically, to expand my theoretical understandings, and pedagogy. Individually, they are inspiring and motivating scholars who I am honored to know and to have had beside me. I specifically would like to share my appreciation of Jo Worthy, my chair, who has encouraged and supported me throughout my studies, believed in me and the

contributions I hope to make to the field of literacy when I had doubts, and for always making time to talk through my struggles and ideas.

During my studies at The University of Texas at Austin, I have had the good fortune to make life-long friends and colleagues. Caron, Katie, and Michelle, thank you for your unwavering support; reading my papers when you had your own work to do, collaborating and sharing ideas, and most importantly for sharing your lives with me. Second, I want to thank Molly, who I got to know over the last couple of years, for her "You Can Do It" words of encouragement, and for going for a bowl of soup with me on short notice. Last, I want to acknowledge Erin who I met in one of the first courses I took at UT. I am not sure how it happened, but we quickly became great friends. Those very early mornings spent at Bennu writing and studying are times I will cherish forever. Though separated by many miles, I know she is always there for me, and is a person I trust with my fears and my doubts.

My words cannot convey my gratitude and thanks to Tonja, my friend, colleague, and spiritual guide who supported me through the ups and downs of this process. She was tough when I needed someone to be tough, and provided words of encouragement when I needed words of encouragement. Her spiritual advice, calls to check on my writing progress, and her goal of making sure I had a least one belly laugh every day gave me strength to continue. Her belief in me as an individual, a teacher, and a researcher is unshakeable, and she never accepts my doubts or excuses. It is my honor and privilege to call her my friend.

Maya Angelou said, " I sustain myself with the love of family." My family has sustained me throughout my life – their belief in me, and love for me is constant. One of the greatest gifts bestowed upon me came from my mother, in addition to giving me life, she shared her passion for reading. Without knowing it, she fueled my interests in literacy

and I hope to share her passion for reading with each individual I meet. I also want to recognize my sister's love and support. The times we spent (and will continue to spend) together during our outdoor adventures, as we worked on various creative projects (such as picking blackberries for jam, decorating hats for tea parties, and plastering walls), and just hanging out, remind me of how lucky I am to have a sister that is generous, caring, and a friend I can always count on.

During this experience many things brought me joy, but none compared to the days my sons promised their love and life to the beautiful women they now call wife. Jess and Hillary fill my heart with happiness, and I am so thankful they are part of our family. Their visits to Austin and the puppy videos always brought a smile to my face just when I needed to smile most. However, I am most thankful that my sons have found someone who loves each of them and cherishes them as much as I do.

Last, I want to give thanks to my sons, Stanton and Alex, for their love and unfaltering support. They are the most precious individuals in my life, and have owned my heart since I first looked into their eyes.

The Social Identification of Students Labeled Dyslexic and Learning Disabled Across Literacy Instructional Contexts

Katharine Lynette Chamberlain, PhD.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

Supervisor: Jo Worthy

In this embedded case study, I examined how students were socially identified across instructional contexts in an elementary school. As part of this study, I investigated the contributions of administrators and teachers on students' social identification. Lastly, I looked at three focal students who were identified as struggling and/or learning disabled in reading, their experiences in multiple learning contexts, and their self-perceptions of identity. Ethnographic methods were used to collect data over the year this study was conducted. The data corpus included classroom observations in multiple contexts, fieldnotes, audio and video recordings, student work, pictures, and artifacts. A combination of viewing literacy as a social practice (Barton, 2007), Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory of social identification, and theories of self (Dweck, 2000) provided the theoretical underpinnings for this study. Analysis began during the data collection phase with the writing of analytical and theoretical memos based on noticings and emerging conceptual understandings. After data collection, analysis continued beginning with open coding and constant comparative methods.

The findings provided a layered look at social identification and its influences on student learning. This study highlights the influence administrators have on the process of identification and instructional practices across contexts. Also, the findings point to

the complexities teachers face in meeting their students' diverse learning needs. The cases of the focal students illustrate the complex ways social identification intertwines with learning, and the variation in students' social identification in different contexts. Implications of this study emphasize the importance of teacher collaboration in order to provide students with instruction that has continuity so that students learn to apply what they are learning across contexts and learning experiences. In addition, the study suggests implications for teachers and administrators to be aware of how they discuss and identify students across contexts and to be aware of their personal bias in these identifications.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: A Life Changing Encounter

When I reflect and think back on those individuals who have influenced, shaped, and significantly impacted my life and my thinking, Collin (all names are pseudonyms), whom I first met when he was a first grader, is always included on my list. The first time I met Collin, I had been substitute teaching for almost five years. I had been asked to take on the responsibilities, as a long-term substitute, for a special education teacher, Mrs. Cantrell, during her pregnancy leave. My main responsibility was to work with Collin in his first-grade classroom and to make the curriculum accessible to him. I had developed a close professional and personal relationship with the first-grade team leader, Mrs. Doyle, the previous school year when I had spent four months as a substitute on her first grade team. Collin, a student in Mrs. Doyle's classroom, was identified as a student with autism. Frankly, I was very anxious and nervous to be a substitute for a special education teacher because I felt I had no expertise or experience working with this population of students and more significantly, I knew nothing about autism. In order to gain some understanding, I asked to meet Collin's parents (I only had the pleasure of meeting his mother at this time). In addition, I talked to Mrs. Doyle about the expectations in her classroom, I talked to Mrs. Cantrell to gain an understanding of how she interacted with Collin, I bought a book about working with students with autism, and most importantly, I met Collin.

During my discussions with Mrs. Doyle and Mrs. Cantrell, they pointed out a taped square on the floor, which was located at the classroom entrance. They told me that was the place Collin was to sit when he needed to calm down or in time-out. At the time, I did not give this square much thought, but as I began to spend every school day with Collin its presence began to gnaw at me. How did Collin feel when he had to go to

that square? Many times he resisted. How did the other students see Collin as a human being when he had to sit in that square? Collin's consequence for not following directions was different than the other students. No other student had to sit in a square when they did not follow Mrs. Doyle's instructions or if they had an outburst. Every student in the classroom knew that Collin was a student with autism. How did this position him as a participant, member, and a learner in this community? Even though Collin had a desk in a group with other students, most of his interactions were with me.

Working so closely with Collin afforded me the opportunity to kid-watch (Owocki & Goodman, 2002), to get to know his strengths as a learner and as a human being. I learned that Collin did not fit neatly into the characteristics described in the book I had read about students with autism. He had some of the attributes discussed, but his approach to learning and his behavior contradicted many of them. I also realized that context mattered. Collin's emotional energy and investment in learning during classes he did not particularly enjoy such as music and physical education were minimal. However, when in art, a subject he was passionate about, he actively participated. This was the beginning of my realization that in order to teach Collin, or any student, I must "…ponder the social and cultural forces that shape children's identities, [and] to take into consideration the ways in which…these forces influence learning in the classroom" (Owocki & Goodman, 2002, p. 19). In order to teach children, I had to understand them deeply as individuals and learners, understand how contextual factors influenced the shaping of their identity, and consider how those factors encouraged (or discouraged) learning.

My journey with Collin did not end with that long-term substitute assignment. The next year I became a full-time special education teacher at the elementary school Collin attended while I completed my alternative teaching certification. The years Collin

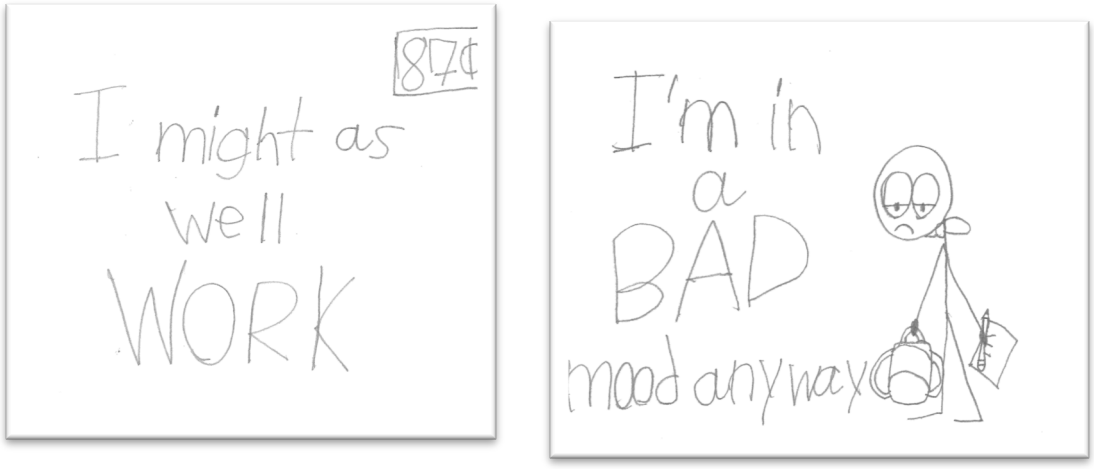
was in second and third grade, my first two years as a full-time teacher, I had limited interaction with him. In order to relieve overcrowding, a new elementary school was opened, and Collin and I began his fourth grade year together at the new school. For the next two years, I worked closely with Collin, as his special education teacher, and with his guidance continued to learn about teaching and develop my beliefs about teaching kids.

It was not until Collin's fifth grade year that I began to look at his literacy practices and the practices expected in schools critically. From the moment I met Collin, I found him to be intriguing, and he continually surprised me. I began to see that the social identifiers (Wortham, 2005) used to describe Collin and the way he was socially constructed as an individual with autism inside the school were limiting. I also realized that I too had been identifying Collin and instructing him in limiting ways. My focus had been on instructing him so that he could demonstrate his knowledge on the high-stakes test. He continually pushed back on this notion by asking me many unrelated questions, doing what I was teaching him sometimes, and other times doing what he wanted. Stopping myself just short of frustration, I decided I needed a new approach. I needed to take some time and look closely at what Collin was doing with literacy, and I finally became conscious of all the rich and diverse literacy practices he possessed.

He was brilliant with numbers: he saw patterns in everything, and he could multiply complex (4 x 4 digits) problems in his head. At the school district's fifth grade, week-long outdoor science school, I noticed that Collin carried around a spiral notebook. When he shared it with me, I saw that he had page after page of writing, numbers, problems he had solved, and comics he had created that told of his imagined adventures with his brother. After that experience, I became an even closer observer of Collin's use

of literacy. The two examples I include here are work he did at the end of fifth grade, as he prepared to move with his family to Canada, where he would attend middle school.

Figure 1: Greeting Card



Prior to moving, he made this card for me because I was asking him to do some work he did not want to do, and he had been experimenting with creating cards. This desire to make cards grew out of his understanding that when people lived far away they sent cards to those they cared about. This card provides some insight into Collin's literacy knowledge. First, he understood the genre of greeting cards. He knew that greeting cards express feelings, and that they have few words and they usually include a picture. In addition, he used humor to make his point, and he had a definite view of "work." He knew that each card is given a price – in this case, he assigned 87 cents as the card's worth. Although it is not visible, he knew that the card company name goes at the bottom center on the back of the card, where he put his name.

My final example demonstrates Collin's deep interest in language. He knew that some people in Canada speak French, so he began to research and prepare for the ways he might communicate with others in the community he would soon call home.

Figure 2: Exploring Canada

In this artifact, Collin shows his desire to learn about the country he was moving to in the future. He researched and learned how the Canadian flag looked, two items Canadians eat, and came to understand that some Canadians speak French. Here, he writes the French words for the numbers 1 through 10, with the phonetic pronunciation. Selecting to write numbers in French further demonstrated to me his interest in numbers. Lastly, he showed recognition that words are not always spelled as they are pronounced, and that dictionaries give both the spelling and the pronunciation.

Collin's literacy practices were purposeful and were more involved than those recognized in school. Many times students thought his ability to multiply large numbers in his head was amazing – and in some ways treated him like a spectacle, asking him to multiply problems just to see if he could do it. Teachers would identify him as being a "savant" and explain his ability as part of being a child with autism. His drawings and the work he did in his notebook were not recognized as meaningful – they were just things he did in his "free" time. His knowledge was measured by his results on the high-stakes test and his performance on school assessments. In school, Collin was always identified as a student with autism.

My experience with Collin added fuel to my desire to continue to grow as a teacher, and inspired me to become a researcher. Getting to know each student's strengths and interests is vital in order for a teacher and school to create opportunities for individuals to succeed. My work with Collin led me to understand that students respond differently depending on context, and to realize that students make use of literacy in many ways that are not recognized by schools. Our educational journeys together created a personal awareness that students can have rich literacy lives and still not find success on a high-stakes test, and schools and teachers position students, often in deficit ways, based on a label they have been given. This experience with Collin significantly impacted the ways I view and teach all students, and inspired a desire to research, discover, and share methods for teachers to use in their teaching as they learn together with students.

In this study, I focused my research on struggling students, specifically students identified as dyslexic, and students who have been identified as learning disabled. All the ideas I learned from Collin applied to this research; however, I focused this study on struggling students and students who had been identified as learning disabled because they represent a larger population of students. Another reason is that once one of these

labels is placed on a child, it is used as a way to identify the student, determine his/her instruction, and position him or her as a particular type of learner.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Questions about how to meet the educational needs of an ever increasingly diverse student population persist in discussions amongst researchers, teachers, policy-makers, and school administrators regarding issues of pedagogy, policy, and teacher preparation programs. In the last decade legislation has been implemented that has significantly impacted teachers, both general and special education, and schools. In 2002 *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002) was enacted, and it called for increased accountability, parent and student choice, and flexibility in allocating funding for states and schools, in an effort to improve individual students' educational achievement. *Race to the Top* (2009) was created to inspire innovation and reform in state K-12 education programs so that every student is college and/or career ready. In addition to these comprehensive education policies, there are two policies that have greatly influenced the instruction of students labeled as struggling learners (those not identified as requiring special education services, but who are not achieving as expected within the general education curriculum) and those requiring special education services.

In 1975, federal law stipulated that students with disabilities were entitled to a "free appropriate public education" and that their education should be provided in a setting with students without disabilities "to the maximum extent possible," known as Least Restrictive Environment (EAHCA, 1975). The need for the change in IDEA was precipitated by the disproportionate numbers of minority students identified for special education services and the fact that students whose first language was not English receiving special education services had more than doubled over the previous ten years

(U. S. Commission on Civil Rights 2007 Briefing). In 2004, the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEIA) outlined the Response-to-Intervention (RtI) initiative: a general education intervention process whose purpose is to provide early, intense instruction for students who are not progressing through the general education curriculum as expected. RtI provided an alternative to the IQ-Achievement Discrepancy testing model for identifying students for special education services, which had previously been the norm (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). However, nearly ten years after the enactment of IDEIA (2004) there are disagreements among federal, state, and local stakeholders about the nature and purpose of RtI (Berkeley, et al., 2009; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010).

As LRE and RtI have been implemented, the lines between special education and general education placements appear to be blurring (Fuchs, et al., 2010), and so do the lines between students who struggle and students who are considered learning disabled. The question becomes, "when does a struggling reader cross that blurry line to being learning disabled?" Special education has historically provided individualized and specialized instruction for students who require significant support outside of the classroom (Fuchs et al., 2010). With the blurring of lines, general educators have been tasked with a tremendous responsibility of teaching an increasingly diverse population and yet many feel unprepared (Brownell & Pajares, 1999). As research (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Fuchs, 2009) has shown they must have knowledge of instructional strategies, beliefs in their abilities, knowledge and understanding of a variety of learning differences, a willingness to work collaboratively, and a willingness to have special education students in their classrooms. In inclusion, special and general education teachers should work together to provide the "appropriate" education special education students and all students deserve, but they often come from different stances.

Much of the current research looks separately at instructional practices in general education and special education classrooms (Scruggs, Mastropieri, Berkeley & Marshak, 2010), examining the effectiveness of RtI programs (Berkeley et al., 2009), how teachers collaborate with one another (Fennick & Liddy, 2001), or how teachers position students who are struggling or have been identified with a disability (Dudley-Marling, 2004; Triplett, 2007). Triplett, Dudley-Marling, and Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) examined the instruction students received in two different contexts; however, research that looks at students across instructional contexts is limited. I was unable to find studies examining influences on the social identification of struggling readers and students identified with a learning disability across instructional contexts. Therefore, this study provides insights into the various instructional activities students participated in as they moved through different educational contexts (general, intervention, and special education), how these students were socially identified and constructed as learners, and how students socially identified as learners in each of these contexts.

My study

In this research study, I strove to examine, understand, and describe how administrators and teachers contribute to the social identification of students identified as learning disabled, dyslexic, or struggling, and how students contribute to their own and each other's social identification across instructional contexts. Using a qualitative research design and ethnographic methods, I investigated the following questions:

1. How are students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled socially identified across literacy instructional contexts within the school?
    a. How do administrators contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic and learning disabled?

b. How do teachers contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled?
c. How do students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled contribute to their own social identification, and what contributions do their peers make to the social identification of these students?

Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory of social identification, and theories of self (Dweck, 2000) provided the theoretical underpinnings for this study. Wortham theorized that learning is "intertwined with social identification" (2004, p. 716), that it occurs across contexts and events, and that learners become different as they learn. Dweck asserted that there are two frameworks for understanding intelligence and achievement: (a) intelligence is a fixed trait; and (b) intelligence is malleable, and the framework an individual subscribes to influences their approach to learning. I also approached the study with an understanding that literacy is a situated practice that involves values and feelings, is highly influenced by culture and background, and "always exists in a social context" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). The combination of these theories provided me a comprehensive lens to analyze and interpret the experiences of the administrators, teachers, and students, and their contributions to students' social identification. Through the investigation of these questions, I hoped to add to the body of research regarding the social identification and learning of students labeled struggling, dyslexic, and learning disabled in a variety of instructional contexts. In addition, I wanted to give voice to the students, in order to understand their experiences as they navigated multiple instruction contexts. Last, I was interested in understanding how those experiences were similar and different across contexts, and how teachers coordinated students' learning experiences across contexts.

Overview of methods

The study was designed as an embedded, single-case study (Yin, 2009) with multiple units of analysis. The school and the school's population, including administrators, teachers, students, and the community of the school served as the parameters of this study (Yin, 2009, 2014). Further, this study was bounded by the context of two fourth-grade classrooms and the other spaces where the focal students received instruction. I specifically focused on how students were socially identified across instructional contexts. The three focal students were chosen as representative of students who were identified as struggling, specifically students labeled as dyslexic, and students who receive special education services. Included in the analysis were data related to the administrators and teachers, so I could describe their contributions to students' social identification. Data sources included a year of classroom observations, video/audio recordings, interviews, and artifacts. These were analyzed using an iterative reading and open coding process in order to discover categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These categories were then examined across the data sources in order to provide insight into the overall case.

Key terms

Several terms are used throughout this research study, and I briefly define and explain my ideologies toward each below. More in-depth explanations of each term are included in other chapters.

Disability: The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) has a three-part definition of disability. A person is considered disabled if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. There is a wide range of disability categories, but for the purposes of this study

the focus was on students who have been labeled as having a specific learning disability (SLD) in reading**.**

Inclusion: Inclusion is the educational practice of educating children with disabilities in classrooms with children without disabilities. Inclusion can range from support from a special education teacher in the classroom to full inclusion, where all students, regardless their disability, are educated in the general education classroom (Kavale, 2000).

Learning Disability – specifically a reading learning disability. Per IDEIA (2004), criteria for a specific learning disability are (a) the child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or … (b) the child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards. Smith (2002) traced the history of reading disability back to the early 1900's. The term reading deficiency or reading disability came about when some students were not achieving in reading as expected when measured on a standardized test. These students then began to receive remediation in an attempt to improve their reading. Sleeter (2010) provided a history of how learning disability was socially created in response to white parents who had children not responding to the general curriculum, but who did not want their child to be labeled "mentally retarded," during the 1960's, a time when reading standards were raised. Based on my experiences, as well as research, I understand learning disability to be a social construct.

Dyslexia: According to *The Dyslexia Handbook* (2014) for the state of Texas, "dyslexia" refers to a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity. Texas is one of the few states that

differentiate the labeling of students with dyslexia from students with a specific learning disability in reading (Youman & Mather, 2013). Identification for dyslexia, according to *The Dyslexia Handbook* does not need to follow the Response to Intervention process. Documentation, including academic record, observations, and evaluations are considered in the identification process.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: This section of the law pertains to all individuals with disabilities and "requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met." Students with disabilities who do not qualify for special education services but are identified as dyslexic are provided a 504 plan that outlines a plan for the student to have access to learning in school.

Struggling Reader: A student is labeled "struggling" when he/she is not learning to read as expected at school. This term is given to students for a variety of reasons, which include, (a) the student is not reading "at grade level," (b) the student is having difficulty comprehending text, and/or (c) the student is not interested in reading (Alvarez, Armstrong, Lish-Piper, Matthews, & Risko, (2009). For the purposes of this study, the term struggling reader is seen as a socially constructed subjectivity that "is created within a social context instead of a result of individual cognitive deficiency" (Triplett, 2007, p. 96).

Limitations of the study

As a qualitative study of one school, two classrooms, and three students selected from those classrooms over the course of one school year, this study presents insights that are limited by these boundaries. By providing a rich, thick description of the data and

findings of the phenomenon being investigated, readers can then determine if this study is reliable and applicable to their specific situation (Merriam, 2002).

Importance of the study

This study attempted to provide an understanding of how administrators and teachers contributed to the social identification of students identified as learning disabled, dyslexic, or struggling. It also examined how these students and their peers contribute to the process of social identification. By observing students across instructional contexts, I was afforded the opportunity to understand the role context plays in the learning and social identification of a student.

My review of the literature showed a gap in the research that examined the experiences of struggling readers and students with learning disabilities in reading across instructional contexts. In addition, a gap was identified regarding research that has investigated administrators', teachers', and students' contributions to social identification. My study addressed both of these gaps in the research, and findings suggested that administrators significantly contribute to the social identification and learning of students through the Response to Intervention process (RtI) they created and their beliefs about instruction. Also, this study found that without collaboration between general and special education teachers, students experience fractured instruction. Last, the focal students in my study demonstrated the complexities of navigating multiple instructional contexts, and the influence context had on their social identification and constructions of identity.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the theoretical framework that situates this investigation, followed by a review of relevant literature. In Chapter 3, I describe the philosophical

foundations, methodology, and methods, followed by findings in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 6, I offer conclusions and implications for research and practice.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Review of the Literature

This chapter contains discussion of the theories used to frame this study, and how they build upon and intersect with each other, followed by a review of literature relevant to this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Working with Collin caused me to realize that student identities both influence and shape schools, and that learning intertwines with how students are socially identified. Collin was a student who was socially identified as autistic. The category of autism affected how Collin was positioned in his classroom and how he was taught, and therefore influenced what he was learning in school.

Understanding how social norms, policy, and the social identifiers (labels) used by schools influence student literacy learning and identities was the focus of this study. I begin with my conceptions of literacy, followed by a discussion of social identification theory (Wortham, 2004), the overarching lens of this study, which posits that an individual's learning is intertwined with social identification. My study focuses on the experiences of students labeled as a "struggling" reader, dyslexic, or a student with a specific learning disability in reading, because these identifiers are often used for students whose literacy skills are not growing according to societal norms. Therefore, I recognize and discuss that the socio-historical categories used in schools are socially constructed. In addition, since learning is intertwined with social identification, I discuss the intersection of social identifiers and deficit and situated views of learning. Teachers' approaches and instruction often draw upon these various conceptions of learning, and can then directly influence a student's learning and self-concept, as well as how a student is socially identified. Last, theories of self (Dweck, 2000; Johnston, 2012) often

influence how students are motivated and approach learning, as well as being the basis for judgments of others.

Literacy

My study predominantly focused on the literacy instruction students with different education needs experienced during the school day, and how they were socially identified in each of the learning contexts in which they participated. Thus, it is necessary for me to define how I view and situate literacy. Drawing upon Barton (2007), I understand that the learning of literacy begins with how people use literacy and their purposes for using literacy, starting with the use of literacy in everyday life and as part of the everyday activities in which an individual engages. Literacy is not a decontextualized set of isolated skills; it is situated in broader social relations, based upon a system of symbols (Barton, 2007; Street, 1984, 2005). Collin demonstrated this with his desire to learn about Canada, the country to which he and his family were moving. He used his literacy to gain knowledge about Canada and its people, and he could not have done this if he had not seen literacy as something that is used in everyday life. As with Collin, each individual brings his or her awareness, values, history, and attitudes to each literacy event (Barton, 2007; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984, 2005). In addition to the individual's history, each literacy event also has a social history that created the current practices. In framing literacy as a social practice, I recognize that it is situated in everyday activities and that there are multiple literacies (The New London Group, 1996) an individual needs the ability to navigate.

Society links the concepts of literacy, schooling, and education to the extent that successful schooling is measured, in large part, in terms of the ability to read and write (Barton, 2007; The New London Group, 1996). Often, schools impose Western

conceptions of literacy and do not recognize other cultures' literacy practices (Street, 1984, 2005). School is only a part of any discussion related to literacy, as there are other aims literacy serves in everyday life, and school-based literacies are just one form of literacy practice. I understand that the teaching of literacy requires the acknowledgment of culturally diverse views, and an understanding of how to build upon students' everyday literacy practices (Barton, 2007; Street, 1984, 2005).

Social identification theory

Viewing the mind and thinking through a constructivist lens, Barton (2007) theorized that an integrated theory of literacy includes the interweaving of three areas of inquiry: the social, the psychological, and the historical. He assumed that there is an internal and external world, and a relationship exists between the two, and that a person constructs a model of the external world with language at the center of that construction, therefore recognizing the role of the individual. This view of literacy learning fits into Wortham's (2004) theory of social identification, which also recognizes the relationship between the external and internal world.

> Social identification is the process through which individuals and groups become identified as publicly recognized categories of people… requir[ing] two components: social categories of identity that circulate through time and space, and the characteristics or behaviors of individuals that are interpreted with reference to those categories (p. 716).

According to Wortham (2004), even before students enter a classroom, they are identified using socio-historical categories that have developed over long periods of time. These categories include gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status. As students participate in school, "ontogenetic" patterns develop and students become socially

identified based on "unique configurations of social-historical categories" (p.717). In addition, "local" patterns of identity develop where context-specific categories are used to interpret individuals' behavior. For example, being a "good student" or "smart" means different things in different contexts. Wortham therefore posited that learning is "intertwined with social identification" (2004, p. 716), meaning that learning has the potential to change an individual and their identity. In his study of a ninth grade male student who was considered a "good student" at the beginning of the year, Wortham found that the recurrent identification of male students as "unpromising" by the female students and teacher complicated this student's identity. He had to struggle against the girls' teasing in class while trying to participate in and contribute to the classroom discussions.

Wortham (2004) argued that learning occurs across contexts and events, and that learners become different as they learn. He posited that students' identities develop as they interact with the curriculum. For example, a student may be a "good" math student, but a "struggling" reader. In addition, the instructional activities to which a student has access can influence how much they learn. Further, students who are successful in a particular discipline are often identified in specific ways. For example, students who are excellent at science are often considered "nerds." Therefore, identity categories become part of the learning process, and the curriculum becomes "categories of identity that apply to students themselves" (p. 723).

Consistent with Wortham's (2004) theory, many consider the labels schools give to students to be socially constructed (e.g., Alvarez, Armstrong, Lish-Piper, Matthews, & Risko, 2009; Sleeter, 2010; Triplett, 2007). Over the past century, students who are not learning to read at the same pace as the general population have been labeled using a

variety of negative or deficit names (Smith, 2002) that have developed and shifted over a long period of time.

Socially constructed school categories

There are several categories, which are recognized by many to be socially constructed, that are used in schools as a basis for grouping and making instructional decisions regarding students (Sleeter, 2010). One label that was relevant to this study, *learning disabled* was socially constructed based on the political climate of the 1960's and from pressure of parents who had power. In her critical analysis and history of the label *learning disabled*, Sleeter (2010) stated, "in accepting commonly-used categories for children, we are tacitly accepting ideologies of what schools are for, what society should be like, and what the 'normal' person should be like" (p. 211). She went on to explain that *learning disabled* did not become a recognized special education category until 1963; a time when schools were being pressured to raise standards for military and economic purposes. White parents who had a child struggling in school want their child to receive extra instructional support. However, the only additional support available was to those students receiving special education services and the only category available was *mentally retarded*. These white parents did not want their child to be labeled *mentally retarded* nor did they want their child to be educated with *mentally retarded* children (predominantly racial minorities). After much pressure, the category of *learning disabled* was established so that white children could receive extra instructional support in an environment that was acceptable to their parents.

Dyslexia was another category used in schools with significance for this study, and similar to the label *learning disabled* was also viewed as socially constructed due to political and social pressure (Blanchett, 2010). Recently, famous people with *dyslexia* are

portrayed as creative and intelligent individuals who experienced struggles with reading (Blanchett). It is important to note that the Texas Legislature passed legislation in 1985 that required public schools to provide services at all grade levels for students with *dyslexia* (Dishner & Olson, 1986). Texas is one of a few states that separates the identification of students with *dyslexia* from those with a *specific learning disability in reading* (Youman & Mather, 2013). Students who are identified as *dyslexic* generally receive interventions and instruction through general education, rather than special education (*The Texas Dyslexia Handbook*, 2014). Therefore, throughout this study, *dyslexia* and *learning disabled* were two different labels that schools used to identify students who struggled with reading.

Over the past decade, the term *struggling reader* has been used in place of labels such as *low reader* or *at-risk reader* (Triplett, 2007). There are varying definitions of *struggling reader*, and the label is assigned to students for a variety of reasons (Alvarez et al., 2009). This term has been used in research, as well as by schools, and covers a wide range of reading issues, including comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and decoding. However, researchers have noted that the label is often assigned based on socio-historical categories such as race, ethnicity, economic status, or language, and not just on reading proficiency (Risko, Dalhouse-Walker, & Arragones, 2011; Triplett). The same has been said of the terms *reading disability*, *dyslexia*, and *specific learning disability* (SLD) *in reading* (Sleeter, 2010). However, unlike the label *struggling reader* or *dyslexic*, the label *specific learning disability* usually means that the student will be provided special education services.

The ways in which people talk about and label students with challenges in learning provide a window into their views about the nature of learning. According to Risko, Dalhouse-Walker, and Arragones (2011), students with reading challenges can be

viewed from a deficit standpoint or from a strengths standpoint, and these stances affect the nature and content of instruction provided to these students.

Views of learning and self-theories

Wortham (2004) recognized that there is an intersection of the local cognitive models that develop as teachers and students learn the curriculum and the models of identity they develop to identify each other socially. Through the learning experiences occurring in the classroom, cognitive and identity categories are developed. The view of learning a teacher holds often influences the types of learning opportunities he/she provides in the classroom. Below, I discuss two perspectives of learning and their influences on instruction.

A cognitive perspective of learning recognizes the role prior knowledge plays in learning, that the individual is not just a passive recipient, but has an active role in transforming input. Cognitivists analogized learning to how a computer processes information and did not recognize the influence of environmental factors as a part of the learning process (Schallert & Martin, 2003). The label *disability* often reflects a view that reading challenges are situated within the student. From a cognitive perspective, the label explains the problem and presents a deficit view of the student (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). When the whole problem is situated within the student, a teacher's understandings and instruction begin and end with the student. Instruction is designed based on a skill the student is lacking. For example, research from this perspective has examined the results of word study interventions on the learning of students identified as lacking in phonics-related skills (e.g. Brown, Morris, & Fields, 2009; Chard & Kameneui, 2000).

Similarly, a focus on students' strengths and abilities reflects a more sociocultural or situated view of learning that considers students' experiences and knowledge as strengths to build upon. A socioconstructivist perspective of learning emerged around the late 1980s and built upon the ideas of Vygotsky, Bruner, Cole, Engestrom, Wertsch, Bahktin, and others (Schallert & Martin, 2003). These theorists added to the constructivist perspective the idea that as individuals making meaning they attend to and are influenced by the cultural meaning of the situation, the social practices, and power differentials in the learning place (Schallert & Martin, 2003). For example, Spencer (2009) and Triplett (2007) found that some teachers had lower expectations for those students identified as "struggling" readers. They also found that when teachers viewed these students as capable, their instruction did not marginalize the student, but was individually differentiated and responsive.

Theories of self

Dweck's (2000) conception of self-theories was an additional framework used in my study. Her theory outlines a framework for understanding an individual's theory of intelligence in order to identify his/her underlying patterns of behavior and motivation. Dweck asserted that the goals individuals pursue "create the framework within which they interpret and react to events (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p. 256). The two types of goals Dweck and Leggett identified were (a) performance goals (the individual is interested in being judge favorably by others), and (b) learning goals (the individual is interested in increasing their competence). This led them to conceptualize a more general theory of motivation and how individuals select goals based on how they conceive their intelligence. The two frameworks they theorized for understanding intelligence and achievement were: (a) intelligence is a fixed trait; and (b) intelligence is malleable – it

can be increased through effort or learning. An "entity theory" of intelligence or a fixed entity, was when an individual believes intelligence is fixed and was associated with adopting performance goals. If the individual believed that intelligence changes, which Dweck calls an "incremental theory" of intelligence, he/she would adopt learning goals.

Using the theories Dweck (2000) posited Johnston (2012) stated that students identified as having a learning disability are more likely to approach learning with a fixed-performance frame than students not identified with a disability. Those who believe that intelligence is fixed will choose activities that make them look smart, may view difficulty as failure, and judge quickly and form stereotypes (Johnston, 2012, p. 23). Conversely, those who believe that intelligence is dynamic will choose challenging activities, engage in self-monitoring, and be slow to judge and form stereotypes (Johnston, p. 23). By engaging students in activities that allow them to see that learning takes time and that the more you learn, the "smarter" you get, students have the possibility of understanding that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Also, by viewing learning as dynamic, the focus becomes the process, rather than the product.

In addition, holding an entity theory or incremental theory of intelligence influences an individual's judgment of others. Dweck (2000) found that fifth grade students who were taught from an entity theory of intelligence framework formed "significantly stronger stereotypes than those who were taught the incremental theory" when "asked to form an impression of a novel group of children from another school" (p. 93). She goes on to say that it is important for individuals to recognize that there are many factors that influence a group's behavior, and that there is danger in not recognizing that there are individual differences in the people that make up the group.

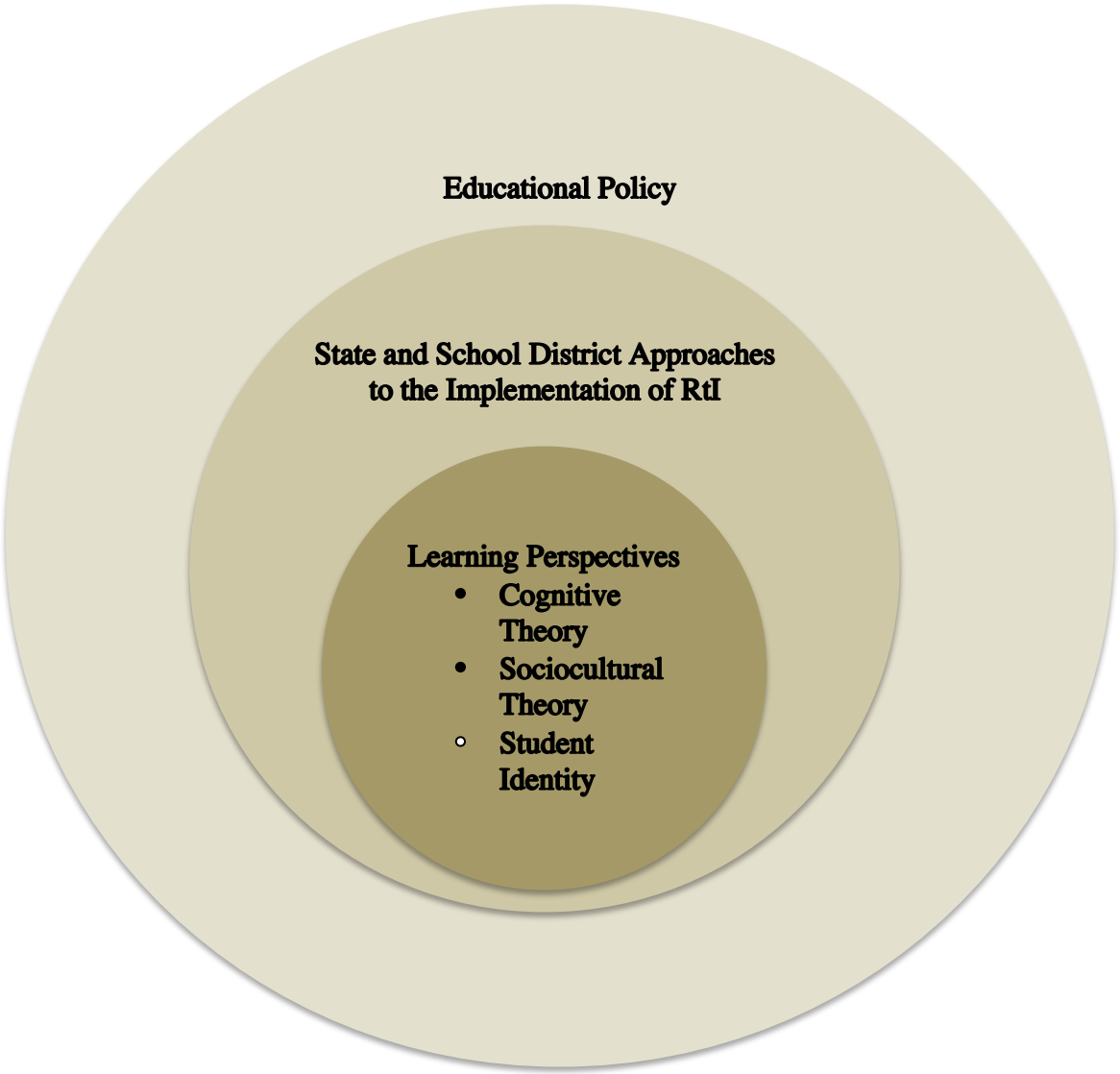
Self-theories (Dweck, 2000) provide insight into students' self-identification and how students' peers and teachers contribute to their identities. This theory, along with

understandings of cognitive and socioconstructivist views of learning, that literacy is a social activity, and that social identification is often intertwined with learning (Wortham, 2004) provide a comprehensive theoretical framework with which to analyze my study's data. In the next section, I provide a review of the literature relevant to this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this literature review is to present a set of research studies that illustrate factors that contribute to how students are socially identified in schools and how those identifications influence their learning and identities. These factors include administrator understandings of education policies and perceptions regarding learning and instruction, teacher perceptions of learning and instruction, and students' views of themselves as learners. The review of literature related to this study is conceptualized as layers of an onion—from the outside in—with students at the core of the onion (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Conceptualization of the Literature Review



The outermost layer is comprised of research related to the policies of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Response to Intervention (RtI), and high-stakes testing. These policies are of particular relevance to this study because it was conducted in

inclusion classrooms, and these policies have directly affected teachers, administrators, and students identified as struggling and/or requiring special education services for challenges in reading. The next layer of discussion focuses on state and school districts' approaches to implementing RtI, administrator's roles, co-teaching, and teacher self-efficacy and perceptions about inclusion. The third layer reviews studies focusing on theories of learning and the instruction of struggling readers or students with learning disabilities. Lastly, I review a body of literature that examines identity construction of students identified as "struggling" and/or requiring special education services.

Educational policies

It was not until 1975 that students with disabilities were entitled to a "free and appropriate public education" and were to be educated with students without disabilities "to the maximum extent possible" (Education For All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). The educational placement of a student with disabilities became known as the "least restrictive environment" (LRE).

Another policy that has influenced both general and special education is the implementation of "response to intervention" (RtI) with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004. RtI is a general education intervention that has two purposes: (a) to provide early intervention instruction to those students who are not responding to the general curriculum; and (b) to provide an alternative to the previously used IQ-Achievement Discrepancy Model for identifying students for special education services. Both LRE and RtI have influenced general education and special education classrooms, as well as influenced the high-stakes testing of students with disabilities.

High-stakes testing is a topic given considerable attention in education today. A test is high-stakes when the testing results are used to make important decisions and have significant consequences. For example, a high-stakes test can determine a school's funding or can strongly influence student retention decisions. The policies of LRE and RtI, as well as high-stakes testing, are discussed below.

Least restrictive environment

LRE establishes the right of students identified as having disabilities to receive educational services with students without disabilities, and it also requires that schools place and support students in a general education classroom before considering any other educational setting. However, if a student cannot be successful in the general education classroom, the school has an obligation to provide an education that is appropriate for that student in a context that may be more restrictive. LRE is not a specific placement; rather it requires that school districts provide a continuum of alternative placements in order to provide the most appropriate education for students with disabilities.

For a student identified as having a reading disability, a continuum of alternative placements could include instruction in the general education classroom without support or with support, instruction in the resource classroom for specific parts of the day, or instruction in a self-contained classroom for the entire school day. Since the inception of LRE there has been a shift in the terms and the approaches used when describing placements of students requiring special education services in the general education classroom: "mainstreaming" to "inclusion." Mainstreaming was the first response to LRE and meant that students were placed in the general education classroom without support, accommodations, or curriculum modifications, and seemed to be a reaction against special classes and called for changes to be made to general education classroom

practices (Kavale, 2002). Today, in response to LRE, many schools adopt the philosophical stance of inclusion. The intent of inclusion is to instruct all students, without regard to their labels, in the general education classroom. Extra support, accommodations, or modifications are provided to those students requiring these services in the general education classroom. Schools implement inclusion in various ways to meet what they determine is a student's needs. Therefore, a student can be included in the general education classroom for part of the school day or the full day (Rioux, 2007; Rozalski, Miller, & Stewart, 2011). The end goal is to improve the quality of education for all, developing schools that meet the educational needs of all students.

Response to intervention

Over the course of the past few decades the number of students identified as having a learning disability has increased more than 200% and several researchers have asserted that many students have been misidentified or unidentified (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005). Congress had two goals with the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA (1997). The first goal was to reduce the need for identifying individuals with disabilities by providing early intervention and instruction for students not responding to the general education curriculum as expected before considering special education services (Bradley et al., 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The second goal was to reinforce the underlying theme of IDEA (1997), which was to require demonstrable improvements in the educational achievement of students with disabilities and to improve the effectiveness of special education (Yell & Crockett, 2011).

RtI is a tiered process of intervening early in addressing "academic problems," usually reading difficulties, more specifically early reading difficulties (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). When a student is suspected of having learning disabilities, or is identified as at-

risk, his/her responsiveness to the general education curriculum begins to be monitored. As a student moves through the tiered approach of RtI, the academic intervention changes and becomes more intensive. Tier 1 is usually referred to as the *preventive tier* and is used for targeted whole-group instructional interventions of basic skills taught by general education teachers in the general education classroom. *Secondary intervention*, or Tier 2, is intensive and targeted small-group interventions that are provided in addition to the instruction all students receive. The third tier (Tier 3), or *tertiary intervention*, serves approximately 5% of the population and involves highly intensive and individualized instruction that some models consider a special education placement whereas others do not (Fuchs & Fuchs).

The International Reading Association's (IRA) brochure (2010) regarding RtI clearly articulates the intent of RtI as "first and foremost intended to prevent problems by optimizing language and literacy instruction…[and] emphasizes increasingly differentiated and intensified instruction or intervention in language and literacy" (p. 3). RtI is not a specific model of instruction that schools must follow, but is a framework intended to support students before language and literacy difficulties become serious. The guidelines for implementing RtI outlined in this brochure include: (a) instruction; (b) responsive teaching and differentiation; (c) assessment; (d) collaboration; (e) systematic and comprehensive approaches; and (f) expertise.

In implementing RtI, schools districts have generally chosen to follow either a problem-solving approach or a standard treatment protocol (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Sailors, 2009). In the problem-solving approach an effort is made to create an intervention that is tailored specifically to address a child's educational needs. This approach requires a staff that has considerable expertise in assessment and literacy pedagogy in order to provide effective interventions and accurately measure the child's

response to the intervention. Those who implement RtI using this approach are more focused on matching school resources with a student's educational needs and measuring progress, rather than using RtI as a special education eligibility process. In contrast, the standard protocol approach to RtI uses a standard intervention for all students identified as requiring additional support. After a student has continually not responded to the intervention, the progress monitoring results are used to determine if the student has a specific learning disability (SLD).

Although a major goal of IDEIA (2004) was to reduce the numbers of students identified as learning disabled (LD), there is some evidence that RtI has led "to patterns of implementation that emphasize the need to identify individuals with disabilities" (Johnston, 2011, p. 511). Johnston found that with the implementation of RtI there has been a focus on identifying students with a disability, rather than a focus on early intervention instruction. Others argue that with the implementation of RtI there could be a risk of "under-identification" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The first priority of RtI is to provide students with appropriate early intervention instruction, and this often means that the students who require these interventions will travel among several teachers and classrooms. This means the teachers (specialists, general, and special education teachers) must collaborate in order to provide interventions that are effective in meeting each student's academic needs (Johnston).

The implementation of RtI highlights the complexities inherent in making decisions regarding student learning, as well as how students are identified as learners. In any decision regarding a student's education there is a tension between rushing to judgment to identify a student as needing special education, and not providing a student access to special education services when required.

High-stakes testing

The concept of high-stakes testing has important consequences for the test-taker, teacher, school, and the school district. The intended purpose of high-stakes testing is to improve educational outcomes by elevating student achievement, setting high standards, ensuring equal opportunities, and increasing public support for schools (Christenson, Decker, Triezenberg, Ysseldyke, & Reschly, 2007; Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). However, researchers have identified some unintended consequences of the high-stakes testing movement. These include: (a) narrowed content coverage; (b) less instructional creativity; (c) increased test preparation where the test becomes the focus of instruction rather than the academic standards; and (d) diminishing student motivation (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003; Clarke et al., 2003; Steeves, Hodgeson, & Peterson, 2002).

With the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Department of Education began tracking the public reporting of assessment participation and performance data for students with disabilities. Any school that accepts federal funding must demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which is based on the number of students meeting proficiency standards and publicly reporting state assessment results in a timely and useful manner.

At the time of this study, Texas provided three high-stakes testing options for students with disabilities: (a) STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) with or without accommodations; (b) STAAR modified; and (c) a STAAR alternative that could be given to students with significant cognitive disabilities who were receiving special education services.[1] The modified test was for students receiving special education services who were academically performing multiple years behind

[1] Information in this paragraph was found at tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing

grade level, who received modified content that was indicated in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), and who received direct and intensive instruction to acquire, maintain, and transfer skills to other contexts. The decision to give a student the modified assessment was made by the student's Admissions, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee. The 2013-2014 school year was the last year the modified state assessment would be administered in Texas because the U. S. Department of Education no longer would allow states to use assessments based on modified objectives for accountability purposes. At the time of my study, Texas was still working out how this population of students (students receiving special education services and working on modified standards) would be included in the assessment process.

The decision of which type of high-stakes test a student should take is a complicating factor in the decision process for teachers and administrators. Assaf (2008) found that testing pressures not only affected a teacher's instructional choices and responsiveness to her students' learning, but they also created complicated ethical dilemmas when making decisions regarding instructional choices. Often teachers wrestle with a choice between district-mandated test preparation curricula and what they know to be effective, research-based literacy instruction that will meet their students' needs (Assaf). Valencia and Buly (2005) presented data that argue for "more in-depth analysis of the strengths and needs of students who fail to meet standards" (p. 520). They cautioned against overgeneralizing the needs of students who fail the high-stakes assessment and encourage teachers to look deeper and to use multiple sources of data for instructional decisions. Valencia and Buly concluded that the current high-stakes test environment makes it more of a challenge to keep an eye on each individual student.

Impact of LRE and RtI

With the implementation of LRE and RtI, the lines between special education and general education seem to be blurring (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010). General education teachers must be adequately supported and prepared to teach students with disabilities because RtI is a general education intervention process, and, with the passage of LRE, the general education classroom must be considered before any other placements (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Rozalski, Miller, & Stewart, 2011). Even though many students with disabilities may receive some portion of their education from a special education teacher, the general education teacher shares the responsibility to ensure that the student is making adequate academic progress. Collaboration and sharing expertise among colleagues can help ensure that students with disabilities receive an appropriate education if placed in the general education setting; however, the nature of this collaboration is not always straightforward. Teacher perceptions about inclusive classrooms and collaboration and opportunities for collaboration have been shown to influence their instructional choices (Fuchs, 2009). In the next section I discuss the approaches schools have taken in implementing RTI, followed by a discussion of co-teaching models, and teacher self-efficacy in relationship to inclusion.

State and school district approaches to implementing RtI

States and school districts have implemented RtI in a variety of ways (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). As of 2009, ten states provided general guidelines to their school districts, twenty-two states were developing a state implementation model, and fifteen states had already developed an implementation model. The majority of the states that developed an implementation model used a blend of the problem-solving and standard protocol approaches. Texas provided school districts with guidance and information on "best practice" models and had some existing professional development

offerings regarding the implementation of RtI. Each school district in Texas had local control of the implementation of RtI and used a combination of the discrepancy model and RtI data when determining learning disability eligibility (Berkeley et al.).

With the variability in the implementation of RtI across states, school districts, and schools, questions are raised as to the fidelity of RtI as an eligibility process and an intervention process (Berkeley et al., 2009). Implementation in schools can be directly influenced by the administrators and is discussed in the next section (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999).

Administrators' roles

Research has found that the principal's attitude toward inclusion is a "powerful influence on school-wide policy implementation and operational innovation" (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). Support in the form of professional development, decreased class size, incorporation of planning and collaboration time into the school schedule, and articulation of expectations of sharing duties with special education teachers is necessary, yet is often lacking (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Fuchs, 2009; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Other studies showed that administrative support and expectations positively influenced the instructional practices found in inclusion classrooms (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). The reasons cited for this were that the principals provided opportunities for the teachers to participate in high-quality professional development (Brownell & Pajares) and in-class support was provided that included the modeling of effective instructional practices (Stanovich & Jordan). These studies demonstrate the importance of a school-wide approach to inclusion. All educators and administrators must be willing to participate so that all children have opportunities and experiences to learn effectively. One model of collaborative teaching

that has been implemented in schools and has been researched is co-teaching, which I discuss next.

Collaborative teaching models

Meeting the needs of students with diverse learning needs requires teachers to share personal and professional knowledge. It is especially important to share the specific knowledge teachers gain as they teach and learn about a student (Kershner, 2007). Sharing knowledge requires teachers to collaborate, and within special education research there is a large body of inquiry focused on collaborative teaching practices (for example, Fennick, 2001; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). These studies have found that the quality of training and provision of mutual planning time are crucial to the success of collaborative teaching. Time must be dedicated during the school day so that teachers can share their insights of students and to plan instruction together. Fennick found that overall, teachers had a positive view of collaborative teaching, but without a mutual planning time the implementation of a co-teaching model was difficult because the teachers did not have time during the school day to plan instruction.

Although the term "co-teaching" implies that teachers work together, the most prevalent co-teaching model is comprised of the general education teacher teaching as the special education teacher acts in the role of assistant. This model is not a true teaching collaboration and brings into question the type of instruction special education students are receiving (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007).

Research on the co-teaching model has shown that there are several issues surrounding the implementation of this model and that there are implications for the instruction of students identified as "struggling" and/or with a disability. Co-teaching research shows that the special educator is often subordinate to that of the general

education teacher (e.g., Fennick, 2001; Mastropieri et al., 2005). The reason for this could be that the special educator may lack the necessary content knowledge, especially at the secondary level; however, their subordinated role was present at the elementary level as well (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). Also, many times special education teachers were expected to assume responsibility for classroom behavior issues. The nature of the roles teachers enact has implications for the instruction of students with disabilities because this body of research has found that general education teachers typically use whole-group instruction with very little individualization in order to meet the needs of the students with disabilities (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007).

These findings imply and are supported by Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie's (2007) synthesis of co-teaching research, which found that administrative support was necessary in order to successfully implement inclusion classrooms and co-teaching models of instruction. Another important influence in successfully implementing an inclusion classroom is teacher self-efficacy.

Teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of inclusion

My study specifically examined how students were socially identified in a school, how teachers contributed to students' social identification, and how students contributed to their own social identification. Teachers' perceptions about inclusion influence student learning; thus, it is necessary to understand what research has found regarding teachers' perceptions of inclusion and teacher self-efficacy.

Across the studies on teacher perceptions about inclusion, there seems to be great variability in support of inclusion (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996). Frequently it has been found that special education teachers are more agreed that inclusion is beneficial than general education teachers. Several factors seem to influence teacher beliefs about

inclusion: (a) self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to instruct students identified with disabilities; (b) the intensity of inclusion—the number of students in the classroom; (c) the severity of a student's disability; (d) the amount of additional responsibility inclusion requires; and (e) the amount of resources available to support inclusion (Fuchs, 2009; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996).

General education teachers are increasingly asked to take on additional responsibilities with regards to the instruction of students with diverse learning abilities, often with little formal preparation (Fuchs, 2009), and often have anxiety about inclusion and meeting the needs of students identified with a disability (Bandura, 1993). Teachers' perceptions about inclusion and their self-efficacy toward teaching "struggling" students or students identified with a disability influence their instructional choices and behavior (Bandura, 1993; Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Fuchs, 2009; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Woolfson & Brady, 2009).

Many studies found that teachers who had greater self-efficacy were less anxious about including special education students in their classroom, the learning environment they created, and the instructional strategies they used in their classroom (Bandura, 1993; Soodak et al., 1998; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1996). Studies have also found that when teachers have negative views of inclusion, there is a corresponding negative effect on the teacher's behavior. A teacher's negative view of inclusion can impact the overall success of the students and is often linked to the less frequent use of effective instructional strategies that have been found to facilitate mainstreaming, such as varying group composition and making adaptations (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Fuchs, 2009). Schumm, Vaughn, Gordon, and Rothlein (1994) found that elementary inclusion teachers were more likely to vary group composition, individualize instruction, and adapt grading criteria than high school teachers. High-school teachers self-reported that the only

adaptations they made to their instructional practices were in the timing and pacing of instruction, and middle-school teachers only reported the use of flexible grouping. This indicates that students may not always receive the instructional accommodations they require from the general education teacher (Schumm et al.).

Learning perspectives

Disability is a complex construct and there are many views as to what is an appropriate education for those identified as disabled, how those students learn, and how and where those individuals should be educated. My study, however, was interested only in those students identified as having a specific learning disability (SLD) and those students labeled as struggling learners in reading. Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, and Arragones (2011) conducted a synthesis of the last decade of research examining the instruction of struggling readers or students with learning disabilities in reading. They reported the findings of the research based on two categories: those studies that addressed reading disability from a cognitive/constructivist perspective, and those that approached student learning from a sociocultural viewpoint. A cognitive/constructivist perspective of learning is associated with teaching that is remedial, in other words, teaching to the skills a student lacks or in which he or she is deficient. Sociocultural theorists understand students' abilities and needs by carefully studying students in- and out-of-school experiences, interests, and motivations in order to find meaningful instruction and experiences that will build their literacy learning (Risko et al.).

In the following discussion, I review literature that is guided by cognitive/constructionist theories, and then I review studies that are guided by sociocultural or situated theories of learning.

Studies guided by cognitive/constructivist perspectives

Researchers guided by a cognitive or constructivist perspective designed their studies based on the identification of a student as lacking in a particular literacy skill, for example, phonics, and the remediation of that skill. These studies reported generally positive results in student learning; however, they also reported that the intervention was not successful for all students.

There is also a large body of research using a cognitive/constructivist lens that discusses specific adaptations or modifications that can be used in an inclusive classroom to meet the needs of students with a specific disability (e.g., visual impairment), and that examines the implementation of particular strategies with students with a disability or labeled "struggling" as part of the RtI model (e.g. Cox & Dykes, 2001; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997; Marshak, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2009; McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005). Many of these researchers acknowledged the complexity of reading "problems" by recognizing that reading is influenced by contextual and other factors. However, they still designed their interventions to address a specific gap in a student's knowledge. For example, McMaster et al. (2005) compared the effects of three different reading interventions with first graders not responding to the general education curriculum. Pre- and post-tests were conducted on student achievement on discrete reading skills (rapid naming, phonological awareness, reading words, and spelling). In order to understand if modifying instruction in the general education classroom is effective, McMaster et al. examined the effectiveness of three "treatment" programs. 22 students received instruction from the general education teacher using PALS (Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies). Another group of 22 students received instruction using PALS along with individualized modifications, and the third group of 22 students received individualized tutoring instruction. The results showed no significant difference

in the results between the three interventions. McMaster et al. concluded that classroom instruction (even effective instruction) might be inappropriate for struggling readers, with or without modifications. The critical message from this study is that schools must have options other than the general education classroom because some students may need more intensive one-to-one or small group instruction (not inclusion) in order to meet their unique learning needs.

Mathes et al. (2005) compared two intervention programs (*Proactive Reading* and *Responsive Reading*) with enhanced classroom instruction. *Proactive Reading* is based on behavioral theory and focuses on teaching and modeling observable reading skills, and then providing time for the student to practice. *Responsive Reading* follows a cognitive strategy instruction model, and views learning as a process of acquiring problem-solving skills through teacher modeling, guided practice, coaching, scaffolding and fading. The enhanced classroom instruction included the school district's reading initiative, which had been ongoing for several years. The school district provided professional development and coaching to teachers so they could provide their students with comprehensive, balanced literacy instruction. In addition, the researchers provided the teachers with access to their assessment data and held a professional development session that was focused on the use of the assessment data in planning and delivering differentiated instruction. Mathes et al. concluded that first grade students at risk for reading failure scored higher on reading measures when they received one of the interventions than those students who received the enhanced classroom instruction alone. The implications of this study are that intervention instruction must be provided along with quality classroom instruction, and that both interventions (coming from different theoretical stances) were equally effective.

The studies discussed above are just examples of the research of instructional practices used in inclusion classrooms that have shown variable success with students identified with a specific disability. These studies demonstrate that much of the instruction "struggling" students and students identified as having a learning disability experience is direct and explicit teaching of discrete skills.

Studies guided by a sociocultural framework

In their synthesis of research examining struggling readers or students with learning disabilities, Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, and Arragones (2011) found only six using a socioconstructivist lens as a framework (Klinger, Artilles, & Barletta, 2006; Orelus & Hills, 2010; Poole, 2008; Spencer, 2009; Triplett, 2007).

Triplett (2007) studied the social construction of students' struggles with reading within school literacy contexts, curriculum, and relationships. Her study focused on the literacy lives of 14 (K-3) students at Green Hill Elementary. Green Hill had previously served an affluent neighborhood, but over the years it had become increasingly ethnically and economically diverse. At the time of the study around 80% of the students identified for reading intervention services were from families of low socioeconomic status. During a four-month period, Triplett observed the reading intervention teacher and four classroom teachers. She found that some of the teachers situated the students' literacy struggles in the home, stating differences in values and a lack of parental responsibility as the reasons. These teachers also did not feel confident in teaching students who had reading struggles and made many referrals for reading intervention services, which eventually influenced these students as being labeled struggling reader or a student needing special education services. Triplett also found that once students received

reading instruction outside the classroom, the classroom teacher no longer felt responsible for that child's reading instruction.

Another finding of Triplett's (2007) study was that the students found success reading with the reading teacher because she socially identified her students as capable and listened and valued what they had to say. This was reflected in her instructional choice of giving her students' opportunities to discuss the texts they were reading. Book talks with the reading teacher were a place where students discovered aspects of their identity and gained understandings of the text that meant the difference between success and failure. However, the opportunity for book talks was only available to these students with the reading intervention teacher. In contrast to the reading teacher, the classroom teacher positioned students in ways that made them feel invisible and incapable, and she believed that their "struggles" were a result of coming from a low socioeconomic family that did not support literacy growth. Combined with this view of her students and feeling the pressure of high-stakes testing, her instructional choice was to keep moving through the district curriculum. This choice resulted in very little actual instruction and did not provide room for group discussion and individual reader response. This study points to how the differences in student socio-economic status (SES) influenced teacher assumptions and practices, therefore limiting learning opportunities, and how changing instruction can help struggling readers succeed.

Also discussed in Risko et al.'s (2011) synthesis is a case study that Orelus and Hills (2010) conducted with Angel, a third-year, middle school, and bilingual student receiving special education services. They concluded that when teachers optimized Angel's multimodal abilities, made the content relevant, and used materials that were of interest to him they were able to help him be a successful learner. Rather than identifying this boy as a bilingual special education student, they positioned him as an "achiever"

and taught him in ways that built upon his achievement. In another study, Poole (2008) observed two fifth grade "struggling" readers as they participated in heterogeneous reading groups and found that these readers' participation diminished over time. Poole observed that the students who had been socially constructed as "struggling" were corrected more during oral reading than "good" readers when they were experiencing difficulty. This study points to the difficulties teachers often have when trying to meet the needs of students at different levels of literacy proficiency. It also is significant in demonstrating that heterogeneous grouping alone does not change how "struggling" students are positioned as learners. Spencer (2009) examined a first grader, Kenny, as he participated in literacy activities in his balanced literacy classroom and in his intervention classroom. Kenny participated in discussions of text in his balanced literacy classroom, however, he was unresponsive to recall questions in his intervention classroom where the curriculum was comprised of a scripted reading program. Spencer concluded that context matters and that students respond differently based on approach and expectations. Lastly, in another study, Santamaria (2009) examined the differentiated and culturally responsive instruction in two elementary schools for five years. She found that through the teaching of key academic concepts and by balancing student- and teacher-selected tasks struggling readers increased their literacy skills. Santamaria's study demonstrates that when students are socially constructed as capable and a teacher uses their cultural histories and experiences to inform their instruction, students can be "successful." All of these studies support and recognize that the label of "struggling" reader is socially constructed.

Although it was not included in the Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, and Arragones (2011) syntheses, Dudley-Marling's (2004) examination of the relationship between identity and social context in two classroom interactions is another illustration of a study guided by a socio constructivist framework. Rather than viewing learning disabilities

(LD) pathologically, Dudley-Marling sees learning disabilities as emerging in the context of human relationships. During the first observed interaction, an eight-year-old boy labeled LD and his teacher worked through finding all the pictures of things that began with the letter *m*. Interpreting this interaction through a socioconstructivist lens, Dudley-Marling interpreted the teacher's talk and the lesson as positioning the student as deficient. Both the task and the setting reinforced this student's identity as a LD student. Dudley-Marling contrasted this interaction with a weeklong observation of a fourth grade inclusive classroom (including students identified as LD) during their discussions of a short story. Over the course of the week Dudley-Marling observed the students' increased engagement with the text and their development using the text as evidence to support their arguments. Dudley-Marling concluded that the teacher created an environment where students saw themselves as capable learners by providing a structure for all students to participate in the discussions about books. This study highlights the importance of a teacher making moves that "disrupt the performance of a learning problem…[which] can have significant effect on a student's learning identities" (p. 489).

As each of these inquiries highlight, there is tremendous power in approaching teaching from a socioconstructivist frame. When teachers position their students as capable learners, rather than as deficient in some way, they open up possibilities for students to succeed. Dudley-Marling states, "No student can be LD on his or her own. It takes a complex system of interactions performed in just the right way, at the right time, on the stage we call school" (p. 489). The way students are viewed in a classroom, how they interact with the teacher and their peers, the lens their learning potential is seen through, and the opportunities they are given in a specific context is in the end what categorizes them as learning disabled or "struggling."

Student sense of self

Many students identified as "struggling" or labeled as having a learning disability have difficulty finding a voice and a valued position in schools. Within the walls of classrooms, students "learn to negotiate their academic and social subject positions" (Fairbanks & Broughton, 2002, p. 393). Students may have a personally validating response to literacy, or the classroom context can bind students into procedural and antiseptic responses to literature that are valued by their teacher, or they may have been resistant to participating in classroom activities by avoiding the task (Fairbanks & Broughton). The following studies are examples of the importance of context in constructing or restoring student identity.

In a study of 12 culturally and ethnically diverse fifth grade students, McCarthey (2001) found that it was important to provide students with opportunities to build their identities through the reading of books with which they identify, and time to discuss issues of culture. The teacher in this study selected texts to read aloud and discuss based on student interest. These books provided opportunities for most students to explore issues of racial and cultural identification, and these texts (the curriculum) played a significant role in how the students identified as readers. McCarthey analyzed data collected from classroom observations, as well as student, peer, teacher, and parent interviews. During the teacher interview the teacher explained her language arts program and described how she viewed each of the 12 student participants. The parents were given an opportunity to share their general views of their child. In addition, they were asked about their child's interests and success with literacy. She found that the perceptions of others, such as parents, peers, and teachers, played a role in six of the students' construction of identity. The view of the student expressed by the teacher, parents, and peers matched the student's perception of him/herself. For the other six

students, teachers, and parents shared different perspectives of the student. McCarthey posits that these various perspectives may be because the student shares different public and private identities depending on the context. Another finding of this study and one that has serious implications for classroom practices is that literacy was more influential in shaping the identities of successful readers than it was for "struggling" readers. For those students that were avid readers, literacy was a significant feature of their identity construction. However, for "struggling" readers, literacy did not play a major role in their construction of identity. This result demonstrates the importance of providing a classroom context and opportunities so that students can connect other facets of identities to their literate selves.

Students need to believe they are capable, and be seen as capable in their classroom, in order to reshape their identities. Maloch (2005) observed two third grade African-American boys for five months as they shifted their identities from "struggling readers" to literacy participants because of the opportunities provided them by their classroom teacher. These observations began with watching the boys first participate in various events (silent reading, spelling tests) and then in literature discussion groups. In the classroom, these two boys were offered spaces in which they could participate. The teacher built upon their oral skills and abilities to question the texts in relevant ways so that these boys began to participate in discussions and became recognized and valued members of the class. Learning the conversational norms was a necessary hurdle the boys had to overcome in order to be heard, but through their teacher they were able to appropriate these conversational techniques. Maloch found that these two boys responded and positioned themselves differently depending on their relationship with those participating in the activity, the academic skills required to complete the task, and the openness of the task. Through this process, and because of the social spaces created in

this classroom, the boys were able to reshape their identities and renegotiate their positions in the class. One of the implications of this study was to provide opportunities for "struggling" students to participate in activities that capitalized on their strengths and allowed multiple modes of engagement.

Wortham's (2004) study showed how socio-historical categories and classroom identifiers could shape students' social and academic identification. In the classroom in the study, the socio-historical category of gender was adapted and changed into a classroom identifier where boys were seen as "unpromising" and girls where viewed as "promising." The socio-historical model of boys adopted in this classroom was that they are disinterested in school. This model is often applied disproportionately to black males (Wortham, 2004, p. 724). Maurice, a black male, was recognized as a "good student" at the beginning of the year. As gender became more relevant to the social identification of students in Mrs. Bailey's classroom, Maurice's position became more complex. He did not sit in silence, like the other boys, but actively participated in class discussions; however, he also wanted to be respected by the other boys. As the expectations regarding gender (boys = unpromising, girls = promising) became more prevalent in this classroom, Maurice became caught between the desire to be a good student and being respected by the other boys. He continued to participate in class discussion, but he had to confront the tensions between two aspects of his identity (black male and good student). This example demonstrates the complexities of identity and the influences local or classroom categories can have in the contribution to a student's social identification.

Using Wortham's (2006) social identification theory to frame their study, Worthy, Consalvo, Bogard, and Russell (2012) demonstrate the influence the curriculum had on students' learning identities and conclude that teachers and peers played a vital role in restorying students during the learning and social identification process. Lydia, one of

the students highlighted in this study, entered second grade with a reputation for being "in her own world" (p. 577) and some in the school suggested a "possible diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome" (p. 577). Mae, the teacher, focused on Lydia's interest in reading to help her become more comfortable talking and interacting in the classroom. Mae was patient and supportive and did not force Lydia to participate. In November of the school year, Lydia became interested in the read-aloud conversation, which was about fairies, and contributed her personal connection. Building on Lydia's remarks, Mae connected them to Lydia's writing (which was an area in which she was reluctant), and identified her as an author. Over the year, Lydia's participation grew, she became a confident writer, and an Asperger's diagnosis was not pursued. Through her insightful teaching, Mae restoried and changed Lydia's social identification from a student "in her own world" to an active participating member of the classroom.

Conclusion

The intent of my study was to examine how students are socially identified in a school across instructional contexts. The combination of learning theories, social identification theory (Wortham, 2004, 2006), and self-theories (Dweck, 2000; Johnston, 2012) provides a comprehensive lens thru which to view the social identification and positioning of students in various school contexts. The studies reviewed demonstrate the influence society, school structures, administrators, teachers, and classrooms have on the education of students identified as struggling or requiring special education services; however, more research is needed in relationship to how students are socially identified and learn in the various educational contexts they participate in. Therefore, my study examined the overall influences on the social identifications of both struggling readers and students identified with a learning disability. In the next chapter, I discuss my

philosophical stance and outline the methods and methodology that were used in this inquiry.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This research study investigated how fourth grade students were socially identified across the instructional contexts in which they were taught and how administrators, teachers, and students contributed to students' identifications. I was specifically interested in learning if and in what ways the social identifiers students carry influenced the types of literacy instruction they received in the classroom and in other instructional contexts. Lastly, I was focused on developing an understanding of how the classroom teacher, the literacy specialist, and the special education teacher socially identified students during literacy instruction, and how special-education-identified and students identified as struggling responded and constructed identities within each of these contexts. The following questions guided this research study:

1. How are students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled socially identified across literacy instructional contexts within the school?
    a. How do administrators contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic and learning disabled?
    b. How do teachers contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled?
    c. How do students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled contribute to their own social identification, and what contributions do their peers make to the social identification of these students?

In this chapter, I outline my methodology and the methods used for data collection and analysis. First, I describe my epistemological stance toward research, my reflexivity as a researcher, and provide a detailed explanation of this study's methodology. Second, I describe the research setting and the participants, followed by a description of the data

collection and analysis procedures. Last, I discuss issues of trustworthiness, transferability, ethical concerns, and limitations of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Any type of inquiry or research cannot be totally objective or neutral, nor can it be separated from the social, cultural, and political context in which it takes place and from those individuals participating in and conducting the study. Creating a study that is reliable and trustworthy is a particular challenge of qualitative research (Merriam, 2002, 2009). Because the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, qualitative researchers must identify and monitor their biases and assumptions throughout their study and make them visible to their readers. This methodology section discusses my ontological and epistemological stance, as well as how I locate myself as a researcher, followed by a description of and rationale for my research design.

Philosophical foundations and reflexivity of the researcher

Both as a human being and as a qualitative researcher, my conception of reality, my ontological stance, is situated in a constructivist and interpretivist paradigm. As such, I believe that reality is socially and individually constructed. Thus, as a researcher I recognize that there is not one universal, absolute Truth, but there are multiple truths based on an individual's subjective experience and meaning making.

Epistemologically, I understand that knowledge is constructed within a paradigm of social and institutional boundaries and contexts, and that there is reciprocal influence of these social systems and the individual and how he/she is constituted by the context. I draw predominantly on a socioconstructivist view of learning, which sees learning as the meaning making of an individual as he/she interacts in a particular social, cultural, and political space. In addition to the sociocultural influences on an individual's construction

of knowledge, consideration must be given to the role the individual plays in order to account for changes in those social systems in which the individual participates. Each person comes to a learning opportunity with motivations and emotions, and cognitive experiences that are unique to him/her. The convergence of and the reciprocity of the individual's cognition, motivation, emotion, and prior experiences, along with the constraints and positioning of the social system he/she is interacting within, influences his/her construction of knowledge (Salomon, 1993).

Drawing upon Wortham's (2004) theory of social identification, I recognize the relationship between the external and internal world. Individuals are identified by socially created categories of identity, and their behavior is interpreted based upon those categories. I recognize that my focus is on understanding my participants' realities and meaning making processes, and that as the primary data collection instrument I carry my own subjectivities and bias. In order to interpret the quality of the experiences I observe, I must spend an extended amount of time in the context, verify my interpretations with the participants, and provide a rich description in order to strengthen my study's trustworthiness (Merriam, 2002, 2009).

Reflexivity of the researcher

Glesne (2006) defined reflexivity as the researcher being "as concerned with the research process as [they] are with the data [they] are obtaining" (p. 125). As I progressed through this study, I continually asked questions and kept track of these questions and my reflections upon them in a journal. Potter (1986), as cited in Glesne, 2006, p. 125) described three ways that researchers display reflexivity:

1. Inquiry into and discussion of decisions affecting the research process
2. Inquiry into and discussion of the methods used

3. Inquiry into and discussion of one's biases and perspectives

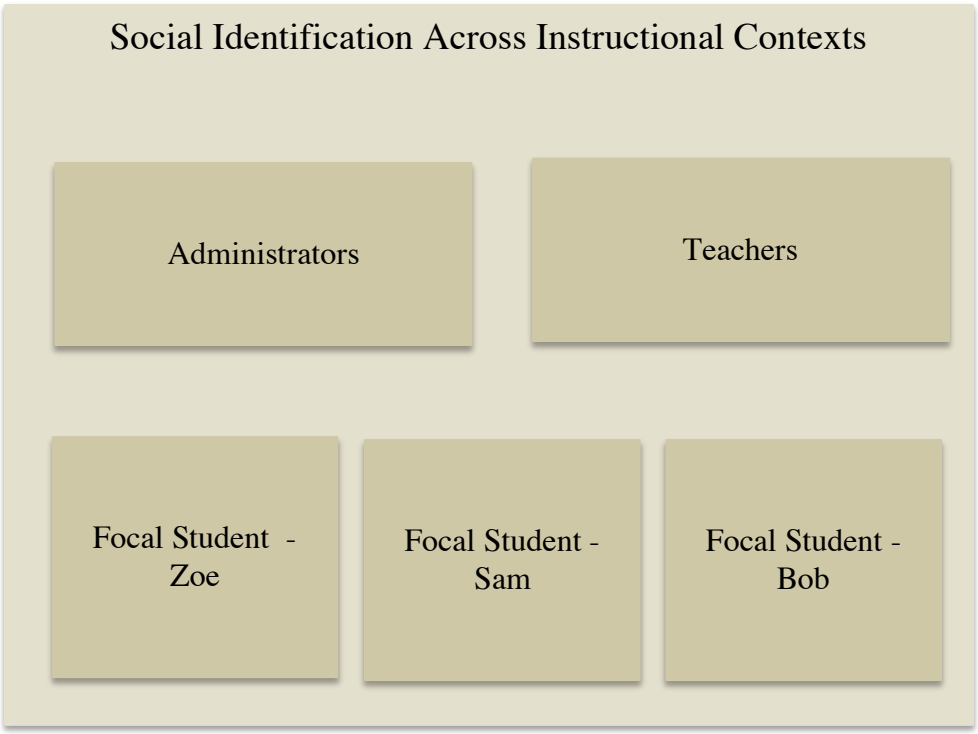
To provide a context of understanding to the readers of this study I must provide information about my positionality. I am a white woman, second-generation American, from a supportive and loving working-class family, who experienced some struggle in school. My father obtained a college degree, and my mother has some college credit, and together they instilled in me a drive and a persistence to achieve. I became a teacher after a successful Information Technology career because I felt drawn to teaching and was answering an internal call to work with children. Opportunity and circumstance led me to become an elementary special education teacher and department team leader. Working with a diversity of learners, I found that many times I saw their brilliance and strengths when others did not, and I became an advocate, alongside their parents, for their educational needs. These experiences defined my beliefs regarding literacy (a situated practice) and how it should be practiced in school (student choice, purposeful tasks, instruction that meets a student's needs and is built upon the student's strengths, and provides him/her with a variety of ways to represent his/her understandings, e.g., drawing, use of technology). Whenever I enter a classroom, I am always drawn to those students who have been labeled "struggling" or have difficulty following the school and classroom norms. Combined, my beliefs and experiences influenced not only the data collection process, but also the interpretations I constructed and the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Research design

The qualitative research paradigm offers the researcher many methodological choices for the design of his/her study. Choosing a design is based on the ontological and epistemological stance of the researcher, the theoretical framework, and the study's

research questions (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002). Based on my research questions, my belief that there can be multiple realities constructed by the participants, and the possibility for multiple interpretations of this study's findings, I chose to design this inquiry as a case study. Stake (1995) defined case study as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). This definition was used as a basis for the design of this study because it implies that the phenomenon studied is complex, that within the context there is activity to be understood, and that there are outside factors that influence what happens within the case's particular context. Specifically, this research study was designed as a single embedded case study (Yin, 2009, 2013). Yin described an embedded, single case study design as appropriate when a single organization is examined and attention is given to subunits that may influence the overall organization. In addition, Yin (2009, 2014) outlined five components that are important to case study design: (a) a study's questions; (b) its propositions; (c) its units of analysis; (d) the logic linking the data to the propositions; and (e) the criteria for interpreting the findings. As such, the multiple units of analysis provide a deep wealth of data that provide a variety of perspectives from which to interpret the social identification of students. Each of these components was vital in assisting me through my thinking across all data sources and phases of this study. Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the research design.

Figure 4: Single Embedded Case Study Design



Within this single case study, there are multiple embedded units of analysis, each of which added to the depth and understanding of the larger case. The overall intent of this study was to examine how students at Brushwood Elementary were socially identified across instructional contexts. In addition, I wanted to understand how administrators, teachers, students, and their peers contributed to and influenced social identification. In order to provide a careful representation of this phenomenon, multiple perspectives, and data sources needed to be analyzed.

METHOD

The research setting

In this section I describe where and how the school and the classrooms were situated, and provide an explanation of how and why focal participants were asked to participate. This study was conducted in a large suburban school district, Stoney Pond ISD (this and all individuals' names are pseudonyms) near a large city in the southwestern part of the United States. The school, Brushwood Elementary, was a neighborhood school that included kindergarten through fifth grade students. It strove to provide a safe and nurturing environment that encouraged teamwork, cooperation, and an appreciation of diversity (from the school website). Within this environment, the faculty and staff at Brushwood Elementary wanted all students to be challenged and to develop a lifelong love of learning (from the school website).

For the 2013-2014 school year, Brushwood Elementary had an enrollment of 728 students in a district of 46,535. Tables 1 and 2 present the school and the district's demographic information.[2]

Table 1: Ethnicity (2013-2014)

Ethnicity	% for Brushwood	% for District
Black/African American	2.6	12.7
American Indian	0.3	0.4
Asian	12.0	12.7
Hispanic	15.2	30.3
Pacific Islander	0.5	0.2
Two or more races	5.1	4.1
White	64.3	43.4

[2]Data presented in Tables 1and 2 is from the 2013-2014 Texas Academic Performance Report

Table 2: Federal Student Categories (2013-2014)

Student Category	% for Brushwood	% for District
Economically Disadvantaged	7.3	29.1
English Language Learners	2.5	8.5
At-Risk	18.7	33.1
Special Education Services	8.4	8.2

Brushwood's student population was predominantly white, with a significant Asian and Hispanic population. The school had representation of over 20 home languages other than English and was located in a suburban neighborhood surrounded by parkland. The administrators of the school prided themselves on involving the community in the school with programs like Watch D.O.G.S., a national program that encourages father involvement. There were many mornings when a father was on the televised announcements with his child and introduced himself to the school. After the announcements, this father spent part of the day with his child participating in various school activities. In the next section, I discuss the participants of this study and the rationale for their selection.

The participants

The school, teachers, and student participants for my study were chosen purposefully and thoughtfully. In the next few sections I discuss the rationale for how they were selected, followed by a detailed description of each participant.

The school

Selecting a school for my study began with outlining the criteria on which I would base my decision. The criteria were:

1. The school had a well-defined Response to Intervention process.

2. The school had a large enough population of students receiving instruction in settings other than the general education classroom for me to select focal student participants.
3. The school administrators were willing to have the school be the site for this research study.

Based on these criteria, I had discussions with three school administrators at schools located in different districts. Two of the schools I had familiarity with, and one was recommended to me by a friend. One of the schools, where I had facilitated student teachers, did not meet criteria number 2—having a significant population from which I could select my focal participants—so it was not considered further. Brushwood Elementary was recommended by a professor who for many years had placed her student teachers there, and I had some familiarity with the school because I had also facilitated several student teachers there. I had tours of each of the remaining two schools (one was Brushwood) and discussed the possibility of conducting my study with these school's administrators. After these discussions with the administrators, I made the decision to conduct my study at Brushwood because, of the two schools, I felt that Brushwood had a more defined and cohesive Response to Intervention process than the other school. Both administrators were knowledgeable about educational policies that affect students with disabilities and believed that they had and were still working toward creating an educational model that served all of the students at their school (based on interview data, September, 2013). Also, based on our conversations, I felt that Brushwood strove for an inclusion model of instruction for all students, with their foremost objective being to meet each student's educational needs by providing a variety of learning contexts for its student population.

The administrators

The administrators of Brushwood Elementary were not focal participants in this study; however, they—their beliefs about and approach to education alongside their goals and vision for the school—influenced the teachers' instruction and the overall school environment (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Stanovich & Jordon, 1998). The school district had appointed Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy as Brushwood Elementary's administrators seven years ago, about three weeks before the school year began to heal and bring together the Brushwood community following a tragic accident in which three staff members lost their lives. Below, I introduce the principal and assistant principal of Brushwood.

Dr. Williams. The 2013-2014 school year marked the completion of Dr. Williams's, an African-American woman, seventh year as the principal at Brushwood Elementary. During her career in education, she was a middle school science teacher, a district elementary curriculum specialist for struggling learners, an elementary school supervisor, and an elementary school assistant principal (Administrator Interview, August 30, 2013). On her school blog page, she stated, "I work with an outstanding group of dedicated educators and together we always strive to put our STUDENTS FIRST…Whatever It Takes!," which gives the community an understanding of what she values and how she views education. As I talked with Dr. Williams during our interview and across the year, I came to an understanding that the word "we" was always present and was a foundational tenet in her approach to education. Every morning that I entered the school, I found her greeting students; she participated in the poetry slam by writing and performing an original poem; and she was at every morning pep rally during the week of fourth grade's Camp Write Along. In our interview, she talked about the importance of parents, teachers, and the community working together to help realize the

school's goals. One of her goals for the 2013-2014 school year was to enhance math instruction, and with this in mind she implemented a book study with her leadership team, held a staff meeting once a month that was dedicated to math instruction, and involved parents through various communications.

Since she had become the principal of Brushwood Elementary, Dr. Williams implemented a system of meetings (designed around a three-tier model of Response to Intervention) with the hope of insuring that each student's educational and emotional needs were met. She believed that "All of our students are all of our students" and that education "begins with the relationship that the teacher is able to establish with his/her students" (Administrator Interview, August 30, 2013). Specialists, interventionists, and the classroom teacher attended these meetings in order to discuss and determine a plan of action in an effort to meet a particular student's needs. Parents were also involved in the process from the beginning so that they "are aware of what's being done, no hidden motives or anything like that, so that they just really have an idea realistically of the progress or lack thereof that's being made…It's really important for them to kind of partner with us" (Administrator Interview, August 30, 2013).

Ms. Malloy. Ms. Malloy, a white woman, had been an assistant principal for nine years, with seven of those years spent at Brushwood. Before becoming an administrator, Ms. Malloy had been a special education teacher for five years. Ms. Malloy described her journey as an educator by stating,

> I'm a high school dropout and I never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, so I became a travel agent for a while and then I became a widow and I decided to invest my husband's life insurance policy into education. So, I studied different career paths and what was going to be needed in the next decades and I decided on education. (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013)

Ms. Malloy believed that "every single person can learn and show growth in something" and that "we [educators] have the resources…to teach all of our kids" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). She said that when she talked to the Brushwood staff about teaching, she told them, "We have to love them [the students], then we can teach them, but the top of that pyramid is when they teach you" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013).

Ms. Malloy expressed that data was the driving force to her approach to effective teaching, and this was substantiated by my observations. She said,

> I look at what the data shows is effective. I don't want to go into a classroom and reinvent the wheel…so it's those tried and true things. We know reading and writing workshops work. We know that's a great way to differentiate for all of our learners…So I look at the things that we're able to do to make sure that our kids are growing, showing growth in some way. (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013)

Growth, of both teachers and students, was the central tenet of Ms. Malloy's philosophy. She said, "I'm a support staff person and so I really take that to heart. I want to support my staff to make sure they have what they need. So, my goal for my teachers is to help them grow (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). In regards to her goals for students, she stated,

> I want them to leave our campus with high self-esteem and a love of learning…I tell parents…the academics are absolutely important…But if a kiddo leaves our campus in fifth grade with low self-esteem or who doesn't want to learn anymore, then we've missed the mark because this is not the place to break children. (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013)

Overall, Ms. Malloy expressed that her goal for Brushwood was that they were known "as a place, globally, where teachers do their best and where we put students first" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013).

Together, Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy created a progress-monitoring committee to discuss student growth. Throughout my interview with Ms. Malloy, she talked about what "my principal and I" had done over the past seven years to develop a process and structure to discuss student progress. It was apparent, based on observations over the school year, that these two women were a team.

The classrooms and the teachers

After selecting and receiving permission to conduct my study at Brushwood Elementary, I had a conversation with Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy outlining the type of classroom I wanted to study. First, I wanted a fourth- or fifth-grade classroom with a diverse population of students. For this study, I define "diverse" as specifically related to the categories of learners present in the classroom. I was looking for a classroom that had students identified as "struggling," "learning disabled," and those who were considered "on grade level." In addition, I wanted: (a) a classroom community that was supportive and inclusive of all; (b) a classroom where students were encouraged to grow as readers and writers; (c) a classroom where students could read and write based on their interests; (d) a classroom where students were given opportunities to talk about their reading and writing in both small and whole group settings; and (e) a classroom where the teacher differentiated for and accommodated the various educational needs of his or her students. At the end of this conversation, Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy recommended two fourth grade inclusion classrooms they felt met my research interests and criteria.

Brushwood Elementary's fourth grade had approximately 123 students and 6 teachers, averaging around 18 students per classroom. The classrooms in which this study was conducted were the only fourth-grade inclusion classrooms. For planning

purposes the team was split into three groups of two. Two teachers planned reading/language arts, two teachers planned math, and two planned science/social studies. Every Thursday, the entire team met to share and discuss the plans (Fieldnotes, September 2013 – May 2014).

The two classrooms in which I conducted my study included students who were instructed in multiple contexts, including the resource classroom, interventionist's classroom, and the general education classroom with additional support. One classroom, Ms. White's, also included students who were identified as "gifted." Initially, my intent was to conduct this study in one fourth grade classroom; after one week of observations in each of the recommended classrooms I would select one to remain in for the duration of the study. After observing in both classrooms, I had difficulty choosing one. Both teachers were very different in their approach to students, but both were reflective about and invested in helping each of their students grow. Also, fourth grade students who received intervention or special education instruction were often grouped together without regard to their general education classroom. Therefore, I decided to remain in both classrooms.

As I observed and participated in these classrooms, I began to develop relationships with the students, and made decisions about whom I wanted as focal student participants. Looking across the two classrooms, I found that I had six students who represented and met my focal student criteria. This was beneficial, because, when observing in the various contexts, I could observe the interactions between the focal students from both classrooms. However, one drawback to conducting this study in two classrooms meant I had a fewer number of observations of the focal students in their general education classroom. In order to insure that I had reliable and trustworthy data, I extended the data collection phase to conclude at the end of the 2013-2014 school year

rather than the beginning of March 2014, as originally planned. In the next sections, I provide an overview of the classrooms, followed by a brief portrait of each of the two teachers.

The classrooms. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White's classrooms were made up of 19 and 22 students, respectively. Table 3 provides information regarding the students' ethnicity/race.

Table 3: Classroom Ethnicity

	Ms. White's Classroom		Ms. Nelson's Classroom	
Federal Ethnicity/Race	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	2	9		
Asian	2	9	3	16
Hispanic	3	14	1	5
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1	4	1	5
Two or more races	1	4		
White	13	59	14	74

During the school year, there was some fluidity in the services each student received in order to meet his/her educational needs. For example, Ms. White had one student and Ms. Nelson had two students who were tested and qualified for special education services, and one student in Ms. Nelson's classroom was identified as dyslexic during the 2013-2014 school year. Also, students' pull-out schedules changed, based on the recommendations of the progress-monitoring committee.

Ms. Nelson. Ms. Nelson, a white woman, was in her eighth year of teaching fourth grade at Brushwood Elementary during this study. Ms. White and Ms. Nelson's

relationship as friends and colleagues began when Ms. Nelson was a student teacher in Ms. White's classroom. Also, Ms. White had been Ms. Nelson's daughter's fourth grade teacher during the 2012-2013 school year. These women exhibited a great respect for one another, an ability to tease each other in a friendly and supportive manner, and were a part of one another's lives outside of school.

My first impression of Ms. Nelson was that she was a passionate and energetic teacher (Fieldnotes, September 2013 – May 2014), and that impression remained constant throughout the year. She completed her master's degree in educational leadership in May 2013 and was in Stoney Pond ISD's pool of applicants for an assistant principal job. During the study, Ms. Nelson interviewed for and was offered the assistant principal position at another elementary school in the district. Before the interview in late February 2014, she expressed her conflicted feelings about even interviewing for the job because on the one hand becoming an assistant principal was one of her career goals, but on the other hand, she did not want to leave her students. She decided to interview for the job, and, when offered the position, she was told that she could remain with her students through the end of the school year. After Spring Break 2014, there were days when she had meetings at her new elementary school: sometimes they were during her planning period (the school was very close by), sometimes after school, and once in a while she would spend the entire day at the new school (this occurred after the state high-stakes testing was complete).

Ms. Nelson was a strong proponent of teaching literacy using the reading/writing workshop model, which aligned with her administrators' and district goals. When articulating her philosophy of teaching literacy and her goals for her students she said,

> reading and writing go hand in hand, and so I try to incorporate the two as much as possible. Both take time and you don't get good at it unless you do it. I do a lot of reading…every student needs to start where they are at their level and it's super important that a teacher knows their kids so they know how to get them interested in something (Teacher Interview, October 21, 2013).

Every day Ms. Nelson would talk to her students about what she was reading and what they were reading, and during writing workshop, she often used her stories as examples for her lessons.

Ms. White. Ms. White, a white woman, was in her 23rd year of teaching and her 11th year as a fourth grade teacher at Brushwood Elementary. Her career included teaching first, second, and fifth grade for a year each, followed by three years in Okinawa, Japan teaching fourth grade. She had been at Brushwood Elementary for 16 years: six of those years were spent as a gifted and talented teacher, and the remaining ten as a fourth grade teacher.

I had been a facilitator of a preservice teacher during Intern II and student teaching semesters in Ms. White's classroom three years before this study was conducted, so I came to this study with some impressions of Ms. White. From my perspective, Ms. White took her teaching seriously. She openly shared her passion for and concerns with meeting each of her student's needs. Her approach with students was straightforward and her expectations for them unwavering. These impressions were only solidified as I spent time in her classroom as a researcher.

Ms. White was the primary person on the team responsible for creating the language arts lesson plans. Also, it was her first year to have students who received special education services in her classroom. Ms. White said that her perspectives on teaching writing had evolved over the years and that she felt that the way her team was "approaching writing now [was] creating lifelong writers, and not just writing for the [high-stakes] test" (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013). She felt that guided reading was an important component of her reading curriculum, but because of the segmented schedule, having time for these groups was a struggle. Read-aloud was also an integral part of her reading instruction so that students could hear her read and together she and her students could have "good literary discussion."

Instructional specialists

Three specialists were included as participants in the study, and each was interviewed and observed as they worked with one or more of the focal students. I did not select these teachers; they became part of my study because they worked with the focal student participants and gave their consent. The purpose of these observations was to come to an understanding of the focal students in the particular context, not to analyze or critique the teacher. As with the classroom teachers, the type of instruction and pedagogical approach was only pertinent from the aspect of how the teacher positioned the students, the language she used—particularly any social identifiers—as she worked with the students, and how the students responded to the instruction and talked to one another. In the following sections, I provide a brief portrait of each of these teachers.

The resource teacher: Ms. Wakeman. There was one resource teacher, Ms. Wakeman, a white woman, who worked with fourth grade. She worked with small

groups of students who were identified for special education services in the resource classroom, located in the fourth grade hallway. 2013-2014 was Ms. Wakeman's 30th year of teaching, and she retired at the end of the school year. She had started her career as a second grade teacher, and then taught third, fourth, and fifth grade before beginning her 11 years as a special education teacher. The reason she gave for moving to special education was that she was "drawn to the kids." In our interview, she said that as a general education teacher, she followed the reading and writing workshop model; however, she thought that special education was different because the students had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the minutes in the IEP dictated what the teacher did, and the focus was to "teach the kids how to read."

The dyslexia specialist: Ms. Golde. Ms. Golde was the dyslexia specialist for Brushwood Elementary. She worked with students who were identified as dyslexic, a separate identifying category than special education in Texas. Her classroom was located in the fourth grade hallway, directly across from Ms. Nelson's room. During the study, she worked with Zoe and Sam until they qualified for special education services near the end of April 2014 and the middle of May 2014, respectively.

Teaching was a second career for her. At 25, she had gone back to school and received her degree in special education from a local state university. She spent five years as an itinerant dyslexia specialist for Stoney Pond ISD before taking her current teaching position at Brushwood Elementary. Her approach to teaching students identified as dyslexic was "heavy on phonics." She felt strongly that she had to "hook them and boost their self-esteem" and that the students had to experience "success in order to believe." In addition to her lessons that stressed phonics and rules, she encouraged her

students to read books that interested them. To support their outside reading she had an educator membership to an audio book library/website so that her students had access to thousands of texts and could listen while they followed along with the book of their choice.

The reading interventionist: Ms. Winston. Ms. Winston was a certified teacher who had a master's degree in education administration and was working as a paraprofessional reading specialist at Brushwood Elementary during the 2013-2014 school year. Her responsibilities were to work with students who the progress-monitoring committee felt needed Tier 2 (pull-out) reading intervention instruction. She was originally hired to be a fifth grade teacher, but due to low student enrollment, Brushwood lost three teaching positions right before the beginning of the school year. All of the paraprofessionals who are reading interventionists at Brushwood were certified teachers. Ms. Winston began working with Sam (a focal student) in February 2013, and her instructional focus was preparing him with strategies he could use on the state high-stakes test. Ms. Winston told me that she believed in a more "child-centered" approach to teaching than what she was doing in her current position. However, her job was to prepare her students to take the state high-stakes test, and the expectations of the administration were that she use test preparation materials and teach students specific strategies to help them find success with the test.

Focal student participants

I spent several weeks as a participant-observer in the classrooms in order to get to know the students and establish a relationship with them, and come to an understanding

of the classroom norms. I purposefully selected an initial group of six students to be focal student participants. These students were selected based on the return of consent, and the types of instructional services they received. My objective was to select students who represented the variety of learners in the classroom. Because I wanted to understand how these students were identified and positioned in the various contexts in which they were instructed, I chose focal students who were all receiving instruction in their general education classroom, as well as in other classrooms. Three students were selected from Ms. White's classroom, and three students were selected from Ms. Nelson's classroom. As stated before, the students in both of these classrooms were often grouped together for their intervention instruction. However, for the purposes of my analysis and for the presentation of findings, I zoomed in on three of these students. The three students selected were representative of the six focal students in that they were instructed in a variety of classrooms and provided insight into the experience of a special education student as well as students who were originally identified as dyslexic, continued to struggle, and were eventually identified for special education services. Table 4 presents an overview of the teachers and the focal students they instructed, and then I introduce each of the three focal student participants.

Table 4: Teachers and Focal Students

	Ms. Nelson (4th Grade)	Ms. White (4th Grade)	Ms. Wakeman (Sp. Ed.)	Ms. Golde (Dyslexia)	Ms. Winston (Interventionist)
Students	Zoe	Sam	Bob	Zoe and Sam	Sam

Bob. Bob lived with his mom and dad and his twin brother Mathew, who was a student in Ms. White's classroom. He also had two older brothers who were in their early twenties who did not live at home, and the family racially identified as white. Bob enjoyed spending time with their family, playing board games, going places, and eating. Bob was outgoing and appeared to be generally well liked by his classmates (Fieldnotes, September 2013 – May 2014).

Bob, a student in Ms. Nelson's classroom, was selected as a focal student because he was identified as having a learning disability and was receiving special education services. All of his reading, writing, and math instruction took place in Ms. Wakeman's classroom, which was located directly across from Ms. White's classroom. When in Ms. Wakeman's classroom, Bob was very talkative and playful with his brother Mathew. Ms. Wakeman had assigned seats at her teacher table, and Bob and Mathew had another student between them in order to help them focus on their lessons. At the beginning of the school year, Bob had support in the classroom from a special education teaching assistant at the beginning of the day (8:00 – 8:30). This support was not consistent, and was often provided by a substitute because Brushwood experienced difficulty filling the position. When Bob did have support, it was to help him finish the morning math problems, and then to read with him. After his annual ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal Meeting) in the middle of April 2014, Bob was provided support in the classroom during science and social studies. Without support personnel in the classroom,

I often observed Bob just sitting at his desk not engaged in any activity (Fieldnotes, September 2013 – May 2014).

Sam. Sam, a student in Ms. White's classroom, who according to school records racially identified as Hispanic, had an older sister in college, a brother in middle school, and a bassett hound. He was an excellent soccer player and played up (in age) on a select team. As the year progressed, he received more of his instruction outside the general education classroom, and in the middle of May 2014 he was identified as needing special education services. Also, during the year, Ms. White would meet with him before school started to tutor him in math. His family (particularly his father) felt that he needed to work harder, and it was a difficult decision for Sam's parents to agree to the testing for special education services.

Sam was initially selected to be a focal student for this study because he was receiving interventions as a struggling student and as a student identified with dyslexia. As the year progressed, the school determined they needed to test him for special education, which provided me an opportunity to observe the process. In all instructional contexts in which I observed him, he was quiet and spoke very little. He would not answer questions unless he was asked directly, and then answered in as few words as possible. Sam had difficulty getting started on his work and then sticking with a task. He said that he was a "pretty good reader….but dyslexic…[and a] pretty good writer" (Student Interview, November 5, 2013). Usually he had one of Mike Lupica's *Comeback Kids* books on his desk, but I rarely saw him reading, even during independent reading time. When he was on the playground, he appeared more comfortable than in the

classroom—talking, laughing, and playing with his friends. Sam was always polite, yet reserved throughout the school year.

Zoe. The first time I met Zoe, a white girl, in Ms. Nelson's classroom, she was warm, funny, and full of energy and spunk. She came from a close family and had two brothers. Zoe was a talented gymnast and was very small – something she openly teased herself about by saying, "I'm smaller than a kindergartener" (Student Interview, February 13, 2014). Her parents were supportive, and Zoe said her mom would sit next to her when she was doing her homework and tell her, "good job." During the school year, Zoe exhibited some anxiety because her four-year-old cousin was diagnosed with cancer and was not doing well. She initiated conversations with me about this situation and always told me about what was going on in her life when I was in her classroom or she saw me in the hallway. By the end of the school year, Zoe's cousin was home and doing better in his battle with cancer. She also qualified for special education services near the end of April 2014. At the end of the year, she appeared to be less anxious, and she told me that she was feeling better because her cousin's health was improving.

In Ms. Nelson's classroom, Zoe had difficulty getting started on her work. She was always cheerful, even when she was worried about her cousin and when Ms. Nelson would talk to her about the amount of work that she needed to get done. Ms. Nelson began to give her smaller chunks of work at a time, so that the amount of work was not so overwhelming. She did not talk a lot in Ms. Nelson's or in Ms. Golde's classrooms; however, she was not afraid to ask Ms. Nelson for help, or to ask questions in front of the entire class.

Data Collection

Qualitative data are collected in order to describe a time and place, to capture someone else's experiences in a specific context, and to tell a story so that a reader can know what it was like to have been there (Patton, 2002). The data for this research study included semi-structured interviews, classroom participant observations, student work, photographs, and teacher created artifacts (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002, 2009; Patton, 2002). Table 5 provides an overview of the complete data corpus.

Table 5: Data Corpus

	Number	Hours
Observations Across Contexts	77 Visits	294:00 (Average visit – 3:50)
Interviews	22	14:00
Video	12	2:56
Audio	32 Total (12 Student, 20 Teacher)	8:22 Total (1:22 Student, 7:00 Teacher)
Instructional Artifacts	83 Hardcopy; 75 Digital (including Weekly Team Planning Meeting Notes (8/19/13 – 5/22/14) and Team Lesson Plans (8/26/13 – 5/26/14))	
Student Artifacts	53 Hardcopy; 42 Digital	
Photographs	352	

Administrator interviews were conducted at the beginning of September 2013. The initial interviews of the two fourth grade teachers were conducted in October 2013. I entered the classrooms on September 10, 2013 and observed an average of 2 - 3 times per week until the school year ended on May 30, 2014. These observations were primarily conducted during the literacy (reading and writing) instructional periods, but also included observations during content area instruction (math, science, and social studies). However, I did not observe the focal students during their math intervention services

(outside the classroom). I also observed the Camp Write Along pep rallies and recess in order to see how the students interacted in contexts that were not specifically instructional. I followed the focal students to their pull-out classes in order to observe the teachers' instruction and students' participation. Within the classroom, I also closely observed when support (special education) specialists worked with students. Post-interviews of the teachers were conducted during May 2014 and were scheduled at their convenience. In addition, I also collected general assessment data, including district benchmarks, oral reading levels, and high-stakes testing data. All data collected for this study were stored on my personal computer, which was encrypted and regularly backed up. Below I describe how each source of data was collected and stored. In order to provide an additional layer of safety, all computer files were copied onto an external hard drive that was stored in a locked file cabinet.

Fieldnotes

When I entered the research site, I planned to spend some time understanding the classroom, the other contexts where students receive instruction, and the participants and their behavior (Glesne, 2006). I wanted to balance my participation in the classroom with observation alone so that I remained flexible and open to changing my interpretations of what was happening. In order to attempt to interpret this context fully, I had to interact with and ask questions of the students as they learned, but I also had to keep in mind that my purpose for being in the classroom was to conduct research. As I observed the interactions in my research site, I reminded myself that I was there to learn from my participants and that I was "seeking to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (p. 51). To gain a layered perspective of what was occurring, I took copious notes that were focused on how social identifiers were used and how students were positioned as

learners, but tried to remain open so as not to miss happenings that might not readily appear relevant. All notes were taken on my computer, and when I returned home my observational notes were expanded into detailed fieldnotes, and any photographs that were relevant to that particular observation were embedded. I also included my wonderings, things I wanted to look for during my next observation, any initial impressions I had, and questions I wanted to ask at the end of each day's fieldnotes.

Interviews

Because I position myself as a researcher who believes in an interpretive constructionist approach to inquiry, interviewing the participants in order to construct an understanding of their experiences and their world was an integral component of data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). It was important that I did not impose my views on the interviewees, that I asked broad questions, listened to the interviewee's answers, and was responsive to them by modifying my questions when necessary. My goal was for these interviews to be thorough, accurate, and representative of the interviewees' perspectives. To accomplish this goal, I conducted pre- and post- semi-structured interviews with the administrators, teachers, and the focal students. The interventionists were only interviewed once due to their schedule and time constraints. Some of the interview questions were based on what I saw the students and teachers doing, and some were stimulated recall questions. For the teachers and administrators, the focus of the interviews was to gain an understanding of their perspectives and philosophy of education, their approaches to working with students identified as struggling or requiring special education services, and their views on and their use of social identifiers in their school/classrooms. The purpose of the two semi-structured student interviews was to gain an understanding of how each focal student identified as a learner, and how he/she

viewed the various instructional contexts in which he/she participated. In addition, I talked to students informally as they worked on classroom assignments so that I could gain an understanding of how they were responding to the particular task in which they were engaged. See Appendix A-I for all interview protocols.

Photographs

Photographs were taken in order to record the classroom environment: table arrangements, the functional spaces of the classroom, and artifacts on the walls. I also took pictures of student work. My digital camera, as well as my iPhone (for backup purposes), traveled with me on each visit to Brushwood.

Audio recording

A digital recorder was used to capture student discussions and teacher instruction, and was used during interviews if the participant did not consent to or was uncomfortable with video recording. The predominant use of audio recordings was during teacher/student writing conferences. Also, audio was used several times to capture student talk about their work (i.e., Sam explaining the island he had created with a peer).

Video recording

Based on consent and agreement, many of the interviews were video recorded. Not all of the teachers were comfortable with video recording during classroom instruction, and consent was not received from 100% of the students in both of the classrooms, so the data corpus includes a limited number of these recordings.

Artifacts

Artifacts collected consisted of student work (actual documents and photographs), teacher lesson plans and meeting notes, publicly available school district documents that directly influence approaches to LRE and RtI, and focal student test score data.

Phases of data collection

Data were collected in five phases, with Phase 3 and 4 running concurrently. These five phases are: (a) pre-study interviews; (b) entering the classroom; (c) classroom observations; (d) focal student participants selection and observations; and (e) exiting the field. Table 6 describes each of the phases of the study, the participants, and the data sources.

Table 6: Data Collection Phases

Phase	When	What	Who	Data Sources
Phase 1: Pre-study Interviews	Aug./Sept. 2013	Meeting and interviewing	Administrators	Pre-study semi-structured Interviews
		Meeting the two teachers	Teachers	Observational notes
Phase 2: Entering the Classroom	Sept., 2013	Classroom norms	Teachers and students	Fieldnotes, diagrams, pictures
		Send parental consent forms home Teacher consent forms		Informal interviews and fieldnotes
Phase 3: Classroom Observations	Ongoing October 2013 - May 2014	Observing and recording instruction across the various educational context	Teachers and students	Semi-structured interviews of teachers
				Fieldnotes, video and/or audio recordings, informal interviews of students, artifact collection
Phase 4: Focal Student Participants	Ongoing October 2013 - May 2014		Focal students	Semi-structured and informal interviews, fieldnotes, video and/or audio recordings, artifact collection
Phase 5: Exiting the Field	May 2014		Administrators, teachers and students	Post-study semi-structured interviews

Phase 1: Pre-study interviews. I began my study by interviewing Dr. Williams, Principal, and Ms. Malloy, Assistant Principal, at the beginning of September 2013. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of their educational perspectives, how they structured the instructional day at their school, the goals they had for their school, how they worked with teachers, and how they envisioned the implementation of LRE and RtI in their school. For the complete administrator interview protocol see Appendix A.

During this phase of data collection, I introduced myself to the classroom teachers and instructional specialists, and explained to them the purpose of this research study. These meetings were held at the teachers' convenience during their planning periods. Our conversations were informal and relaxed, and gave us the opportunity to get to know each other.

Phase 2: Entering the classroom. This phase involved gaining an understanding of the classroom norms in both of the fourth grade classrooms and provided an opportunity to learn about the students and the teachers that made up these two communities. Consent forms were sent home to parents with a cover letter that contained some brief personal information about me, the researcher. This letter was requested and approved by the principal, Dr. Williams. Before sending it home, I introduced myself to the students, explained my study, and then sent the forms home in the "Tuesday Folders." Data collected during this phase included fieldnotes, informal discussions with the

teachers and students, artifacts, researcher drawn diagrams (classroom seating charts), and pictures of the classrooms.

Phase 3: Classroom observations. Phase 3 lasted for the remainder of the Fall 2013 school semester through the end of May 2014 (the end of the school year). Teachers were interviewed during this phase. See Appendix B for the complete teacher interview protocols. As consent forms came in, I was able to begin video (very infrequently and selectively) and audio recording classroom interactions and have informal discussions with groups of students about their learning. The group discussion protocol is in Appendix C. It was my intent to observe instruction across the school day and in various contexts two to three times per week. As I observed, I took detailed observation notes, which I then turned into expanded fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) at the end of the day. Lastly, during this phase I selected six focal students in order to focus my observations for the remainder of the study. These students represented the diversity of learners in the classroom and the variety of instructional services students received based on their defined instructional needs.

Phase 4: Focal student participants. Phase 4 ran concurrently with Phase 3 from late October 2013 until the end of May 2014. This phase began with interviews of the focal students to gain insight into how they saw themselves as learners, and how they viewed the various contexts in which they received instruction. Appendix D has the complete first student interview protocol. The focus of this stage was to collect data (fieldnotes, audio/video recordings, and work artifacts) around each of the focal student's

interactions within the instructional contexts, the understandings he/she constructed, and his/her self-concept as a learner.

Phase 5: Exiting the field. As I completed Phases 3 and 4, I began to prepare myself for exiting the field. My goals during this phase were to complete final interviews of the classroom teachers and focal students, interview the instructional specialists, and to member check any initial findings and noticings. I also wanted to express my appreciation to everyone involved in this endeavor. Two changes were made to the original exit plan: (a) a combined final interview of the administrators was added; and (b) the two classroom teachers, Ms. Nelson and Ms. White, were asked to write up a portrait of each of the focal students in their classroom (see Appendix I for the questions I asked them to consider). The administrators were interviewed together in order to have them reflect together on the 2013-2014 school year and to articulate their goals for the coming school year. See Appendices E, F, G, and H for the final teacher, student, interventionist, and administration interview protocols.

Data analysis

Qualitative research can generate an enormous amount of data, and managing the organization of these data is vital in order to approach analysis in a structured manner (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). With this in mind, I created a "case study database" (Yin, 2009, 2014) using Atlas.ti, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program, as well as a hardcopy database. Informal analysis began during the data collection phase (Merriam, 2009) with the writing of fieldnotes. As I expanded my fieldnotes I engaged in the "active processes of interpretation and sense-making: noting

and writing down some things as 'significant,' noting but ignoring others as 'not significant,' and even missing other possible significant things altogether" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). These initial impressions turned into preliminary lines of analysis, and I began to write analytical and theoretical memos (Merriam, 2009).

A potential challenge with single-case embedded case study designs is that the case study remains focused on the understanding of the larger phenomenon and does not become focused on the analysis of the sub-units (Yin, 2009). As I worked through the analysis of the data, I was conscious of this potential shift in focus and continually attempted to bring my findings at the sub-unit level back to the analysis of the larger phenomenon. In order to focus my analysis, I created Table 7, which outlines how each data source was analyzed, and how each embedded unit of analysis was constructed based on the various data sources, using a theoretical lens of social identification theory (Wortham, 2004) and self-theories (Dweck, 2000).

Table 7: Data sources and units of analysis

	Total System	**Intermediate Units**		**Individual Units**		
Unit/Case Description	*Social Identification Across Instructional Contexts*	*School Testing Results Across Sub-groups*	*Classroom Observations*	*Administrator Interviews*	*Teacher Interviews*	*Student Interviews*
Fourth – Grade Classrooms'	Structural, instructional, behavioral properties, meeting the different educational needs of students and how social identifiers are used in these contexts	Interpretation of student achievement on report cards and high-stakes test results	Social identifiers, instructional practices, teacher interaction, student interaction and identity	Beliefs, interpretation of policy, social identifiers	Teacher roles, collaboration, perspectives, instructional practices, social identifiers	Identity as a learner, social identifiers, achievement
Administrators	Perspectives, interpretation of policy, social identifiers	Influence of test scores and social identifiers on the structure of instruction		Perspectives, interpretation of policy, social identifiers	Roles, structural properties	Social identifiers
Teachers	Teacher roles, collaboration, perspectives instructional practices, use of social identifiers,	Influence of test scores and social identifiers on instructional practices	Classroom structure, instruction provided students with varying, learning needs, positioning of students, social identifiers	Roles, structural properties	Teacher roles, collaboration, perspectives, instructional practices	Positioning of students and social identifiers
Students	Identity as a learner, achievement, influence of social identifiers	Identity	Response to instruction across a variety of context, identity as a learner, influence of social identifiers		By inference, teacher role and social identifiers on identity	Behavior, attitude, identity as a learner, social identifiers

Note: Adapted from Box 10 (Yin, 2009, p. 51)

Once the data collection phase was complete, data analysis followed a more formal analysis process. I continually returned to the data to revisit and reconsider my assertions in order to ground my findings in the data and the theoretical framework of this study. Below are the steps I followed during the analysis phase:

1. During data collection, all data were organized and an Excel spreadsheet was kept that documented the date, time, and type of data collected.
2. After data collection, data sources were imported into Atlas.ti and the coding process began.
3. I began with an open-coding process of interviews and fieldnotes by reading and reading each source while remaining flexible in my interpretations and continually refining codes when necessary (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My codes were generated with the theories of social identification (Wortham, 2004) and self-theories (Dweck, 2000) in mind.
4. Once open coding was complete, I then began a constant-comparative coding process to verify my interpretations, while looking for disconfirming evidence, across data sources (student work, teacher created artifacts, fieldnotes, and interviews). During this process, I continued to write analytical and theoretical memos. I then started the process of collapsing or grouping codes within Atlas.ti. I also "pulled" the data out of Atlas.ti so that I had hard copies of chunks of data that I could manipulate and sort.
5. I then began the process of "axial coding" to refine the categories and to determine the relationships between the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this process, themes began to emerge.

6. Throughout my analysis, I considered alternative perspectives by continually asking questions about the data and making comparisons for similarities and differences across the data sources in an attempt to provide a comprehensive interpretation (Merriam, 2009).
7. Case studies were then written for the administrators, teachers, and each of the three focal students in order to answer the research question how students were socially identified across instructional contexts at Brushwood Elementary.

Table 8 provides an example of the codes and themes that emerged in relationship to the administrators, teachers, and students, followed by a sample Table 9 of an analytical memo regarding the *Complexity of Collaboration* theme.

Table 8: Examples of Themes and Codes

	Administrators	Teachers	Students
Theme:	Complexity of Collaboration	Complexities of Meeting Student Needs	Making-sense: Why don't they know this?
Codes:	• Collaboration Tensions • Gen-ed/Sped Collaboration • Organic • Time Constraints	• Providing Accommodations • Advocating • Inclusion in Class Projects	• Wondering • Disruptions • Uncertainty • Learning from Peers

Table 9: Example of an Analytical Memo

The issues surrounding collaboration seemed to be complex. There seemed to be different views of what this meant; however, everyone—administrators and teachers—agreed that collaboration should be taking place. The administrators felt that they provided opportunities for teachers to collaborate during a monthly staff meeting and that additional collaboration would happen "organically" (Administrator Interviews). The special education teacher felt that conversations in the hallway were enough to address the classroom teachers concerns. And the classroom teachers wanted a set time where they could discuss the instruction students in their classroom were receiving in special education so that they could better meet the students' needs and provide continuity in their instruction. Kershner's (2007) study pointed out the importance of teachers having opportunities during the day to collaborate. Research has also found that administrator leadership is required to establish a time for teachers to collaborate (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie (2007). In addition to these various views regarding collaboration, there are time constraints and the impact on student learning to consider.

The analysis process was not as linear as described above, and it continued throughout the writing process. I represent in my findings my interpretation of what I observed. I recognize that my personal experiences, values, and bias filtered my observations, choices, and interpretations of the data; however, I continually strove to present findings that were plausible and defendable based on the data. I also worked to understand the data from the multiple viewpoints of the participants and the various data sources.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers have an obligation to be as transparent as possible in presenting their study's findings, assumptions, and biases and in forthrightly discussing any ethical dilemmas that may have arisen during the study in order to provide a framework for their readers to decide on the trustworthiness of the study (Merriam,

2002). Lincoln and Guba (1986) emphasized that the researcher who is balanced, fair, and conscientious achieves trustworthiness. This view of trustworthiness in qualitative research corresponds to my epistemological stance that as the primary instrument for data collection, I must inductively build concepts and conclusions based on the data collected, recognizing that there are multiple interpretations possible. In order to conduct a rigorous and trustworthy study, the qualitative researcher must address four issues: internal validity, reliability, external validity, and ethical concerns (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002).

Internal validity (credibility)

Internal validity addresses the question of whether a study's findings can be seen as an authentic representation of reality (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 2002). Becuase the primary instrument of data collection is the researcher**,** the interpretations of reality are based on the observations and other data they have collected, and these interpretations must be seen as credible to the reader. In order to address issues of internal validity and for this study to be considered credible, I used the following strategies:

- Triangulation: having multiple data sources, and multiple theories to confirm the findings (Denzin, 1970)
- Member checking: asking the participants to read the researcher's findings and make comments, along with peer reviews
- Spending a sustained time in the research site to ensure an in-depth understanding of the context (Merriam, 2002)

Multiple data sources (interviews, observation fieldnotes, artifacts, etc.) were used to provide a level of credibility. Multiple examples across varying data sources to support the findings helped ensure that the interpretation provided by the researcher could be substantiated. Also, spending an entire school year in the setting, with numerous observations, provided me the opportunity to see various events and a wealth of data to analyze. Finally, I asked the participants to comment on my preliminary findings and interpretations during post-interviews, as well as informal conversations held while I was observing at the school.

Reliability (dependability)

A qualitative research study is not designed for replication in the same way as experimental research because human behavior is not static and not everyone experiences an event in the same way (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative researchers must ensure that their findings "are consistent with the data collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 288). The previous strategies discussed for internal validity also address issues of reliability. In addition, researchers should use multiple methods of collecting data and keep an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), so that they can explain how they arrived at their conclusions. To ensure that this study was dependable, I kept an audit trail of all data collected, the entire analytical process, and every analytical and theoretical memo.

External validity (transferability and generalizability)

The purpose of case study is not generalization, but is particularization: coming to understand a particular case for what it is and what it does (Stake, 1995). Since qualitative research populations are usually small and purposefully selected, results cannot be statistically generalized (Merriam, 2002). Generalizability will be addressed in this study by providing a rich, thick description of the data and findings and having diversity and variation in the purposefully selected sample, specifically in the selection of the focal students, in order to provide a larger understanding of the phenomena being studied. All of the above mentioned strategies provide the readers with the necessary information to determine if this study is reliable and applicable to their specific situation (Merriam, 2002).

Ethical concerns

Lastly, qualitative researchers must be constantly aware of ethical issues that might arise during their study, particularly during data collection and the dissemination of the findings (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 2002). Due to the interactive relationship of the participants and researcher, ethical dilemmas may arise, and how the researcher handles these issues points to their personal trustworthiness, as well as the study's trustworthiness. These dilemmas were addressed by keeping an audit trail and forthrightly and consistently examining my assumptions and bias by keeping a journal during the entire study period (Merriam, 2002). Becuase I spent a school year with the participants of this study, it was crucial for me to develop and maintain rapport, while

continually reflecting upon my frames of interpretation and subjectivity. An awareness of my subjectivities assisted me in monitoring "those perspectives that might, as [I] analyze and write up [my] data, shape, skew, distort, construe, and misconstrue what [I] make of what [I] see and hear" (Glesne, 2006, p. 123). I do not think that I was able to keep my subjectivity completely out of my work; however, I was continually aware of the ways it might potentially distort my interpretations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings related to the administrators and teachers' contributions to the social identification of students' labeled dyslexic and learning disabled. Then, Chapter 5 presents three focal student case studies that provide an understanding of how these students and their peers contributed to their social identification.

Chapter 4: Administrator Leadership and Teacher Influences on Social Identification

In the next two chapters, I discuss findings related to the research questions this study examined. As discussed in Chapter Two, the theories an individual holds about intelligence can influence how they judge and label others (Dweck, 2000; Johnston, 2012; Wortham, 2004). Also, Wortham (2004, 2006) described social identification as a process where an individual's behaviors are interpreted with reference to socially recognized categories. Therefore, in this chapter, I begin by discussing how administrators' beliefs influenced the internal processes, instructional decisions, and social identification of students at Brushwood Elementary. The Response to Intervention (RtI) process established at Brushwood Elementary is presented to show that the judgments of student achievement made during these meetings influenced not only how students were socially identified, but also had the potential to influence the ways students self identified. In the final section related to the administrators' contributions to the social identification of students, I discuss findings that highlight the complexities of collaboration. My discussion of findings then proceeds to focus on the teachers and their contributions to the social identification of students with an examination of classroom contexts, language, teacher beliefs regarding instruction and student identity, and the complexities of meeting each student's needs. Chapter Five then discusses three focal students' self-conceptions of identity as they moved within and across different instructional contexts. Specifically, findings are presented that examine the influences of context, teachers, and peers on the focal students' social identification.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP, SUPPORT, AND BELIEFS

There are many factors influencing the social identification of students in schools, including social norms and institutional structures, educational policies, context, and administrator and teacher beliefs. Both Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy's (the principal and assistant principal respectively) approach to leadership, their beliefs about education, the goals they had for their students and teachers, and the support systems they provided contributed to the social identification of students at Brushwood Elementary (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Fuchs, 2009). Dr. Williams articulated her belief regarding meeting student needs when she said, "What we frame all of our decisions on and what I try to reinforce is that…all of our decisions [are] about the students. Everything else is secondary" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). Both administrators expressed goals for the students of Brushwood that went beyond identifying students for intervention or special education services. Ms. Malloy said she wanted "students…to leave our campus with high self-esteem and a love of learning…but, if a kiddo leaves our campus in fifth grade with low self-esteem or who doesn't want to learn anymore, then we've missed the mark" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). Dr. Williams articulated a similar goal: "That they [students] are able to reach their highest potential…and leave the classroom feeling that they were loved, validated, appreciated, that they can stretch and grow…share their thinking" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). In the next section, I discuss specific factors related to the social identification of students at Brushwood Elementary, including the administrators' belief regarding differentiated instruction. This was accomplished at Brushwood through the use of reading and writing workshop, which allows for teachers to meet the individual needs of their students through student choice, conferencing, and support. For those students who needed additional support, the administrators had

established a meeting structure where student academic and social needs were discussed. Last, I discuss the administrators' beliefs and complicating factors regarding teacher collaboration.

"Differentiate for all of our learners"

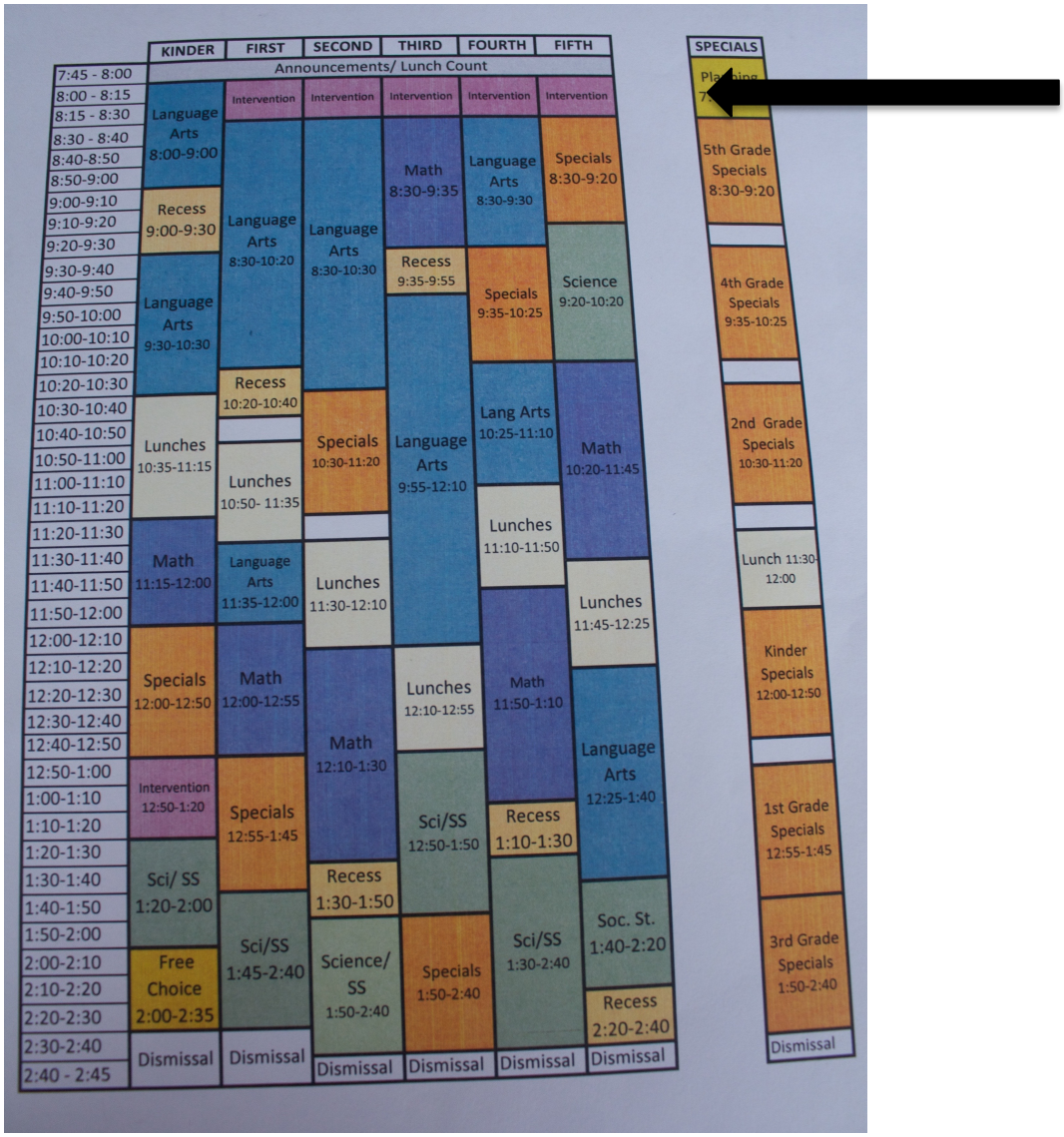
Research has shown that administrators' beliefs about instruction and their support of teachers influence general education teachers' instructional practices in inclusion classrooms (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). Both Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy articulated their expectations regarding effective instructional practices to meet the academic and social needs of all of the students at Brushwood. They stressed the conception of differentiation of instruction throughout the year and how they supported their teachers in order to create a culture of instructional differentiation.

One theme that was prevalent throughout my conversations with the teachers and administrators was differentiation of instruction. The general approach recommended by the school district, as well as Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy, for the teaching of literacy was reading and writing workshop. In addition, they both wanted the instructional approaches used by their teachers to be based on data, including informal assessments, district benchmarks, running records, and STAAR (the state high-stakes assessment). Ms. Malloy summed it up when she said, "I'm kind of a data nerd, so I look at what the data shows is effective. We know reading and writing workshop work. We know that's a great way to differentiate for all of our learners" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). Dr. Williams further explained why differentiation was a critical component to student success by stating, "Differentiation is key. Every student is going to be different…how a lesson is translated to ensure every student in the class is able to grasp it, is the art of teaching" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). However, reading

and writing workshop was the approach to literacy instruction only in the general education classrooms; it was not a pedagogical practice in the special education or intervention classrooms (Fieldnotes, September 2013 – May 2014). Ms. Malloy alluded to the idea that when she spoke about differentiation, it was in relationship to the instruction in the general education classrooms only. She said, "The ideal is that all of our teachers are differentiating for all of the kiddos that are left that don't have an imposed label or need, and we're really trying to focus teaching on what's effective" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). This statement seems to imply that students in special education, intervention groups, and the gifted program were receiving differentiated instruction in those contexts. Ms. Malloy appeared to assume that the instruction received outside the general education classroom was already differentiated and effective.

The school schedule established by Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy supported the concept of differentiation by designating the 8:00 – 8:30 AM timeframe for intervention (See Figure 5). Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy established the 8:00 – 8:30 time so that the general education teachers had dedicated time to work with small groups or individual students on concepts with which they needed extra support. Those students not working with the teacher would follow the established routine of working on a few review math problems, writing to a wide-open prompt, independently reading, finishing work from a previous lesson, and word work (Classroom Observations, September 2013 - May 2014). Since this time was designated school-wide and across grade levels, the students knew the expectations and routines, and were usually engaged in their work.

Figure 5: Brushwood Elementary School Schedule



Mathes et al. (2005) was a study of two reading intervention programs conducted with first grade students. It found that intervention instruction must be provided along with quality classroom instruction in order for students to be better prepared for second grade. Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams seemed to agree that interventions outside of the classroom should be provided in addition to support and interventions in the classroom (see Figure 4). One of their goals for the next school year (2014-2015) was to focus on

regularly differentiating instruction in science and social studies. Professional development was to be provided before school started. Ms. Malloy said, "We're going to have our…gifted teachers start us off with how to differentiate high. Then we're going to have our special education team come in and talk about how they can modify and adapt" (Joint Administrator Interview, May 28, 2014). This statement seems to imply that all teachers (general education, special education, and gifted education) would work together to provide differentiated instruction for science and social studies during the 2014-2015 school year. These two administrators seemed to recognize the complexity of differentiating for a wide spectrum of learners. They wanted all of the teachers involved in the process so students were receiving effective instruction in all contexts, and they hoped to accomplish this through staff meetings, professional development, and the process of identifying students who needed additional instructional support.

The intervention and identification process at Brushwood Elementary

Prior to the enactment of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), the IQ-Achievement Discrepancy Model was the primary criterion used by states to identify students for special education services. As outlined in Procedures for Evaluating Specific Learning Disabilities in the Federal Register (USOE, 1977), a severe discrepancy (at least 2 standard deviations) between a student's intelligence quotient (IQ) and achievement was an indicator of a learning disability (Stuebings et al., 2002). The specific language regarding the IQ-Achievement Discrepancy Model was included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997). IDEIA (2004) established Response to Intervention as a means to "promote effective early intervention and" an alternative "valid means of LD [learning disabled] identification" (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009; Fuchs & Fuchs,

2006). Though the major goal of RtI as stated by Fuchs and Fuchs (2009) was to "prevent long-term debilitating academic failure" (p. 41), the process begins with assessments of the student's academic, emotional, and social strengths and needs (Burns & Gibbons, 2012). Much of the literature on the implementation of RtI has emphasized two approaches: the problem-solving model and the standard protocol. The problem-solving protocol implements a decision-making team that: (a) defines the problem; (b) plans an intervention (research-based); (c) implements an intervention; and (d) evaluates the student's progress, whereas the standard protocol implements a research-based intervention that has been standardized and shown to be effective with students with similar learning needs (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). The state in which this study was conducted gives local control for implementation of RtI (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009) and therefore, the beliefs and understandings of the school administrators are a vital component of how RtI was structured.

Identification process: Meeting all students' needs while moving away from a "Let's test" mentality

When Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy came to Brushwood Elementary, seven years prior to the beginning of this study, there were no defined student referral processes for intervention or special education services. Historically, campus expectations at Brushwood have been higher than at other campuses, because the student population had generally performed well on district and state assessments; therefore, teachers expected students to read at a higher level. Eventually, because of changing demographics in the school neighborhood, there were more students who did not meet campus expectations, so "they [the students] [could] stick out some" (Administrator Interview, September 9, 2013). As the teachers grappled with these changes and the expectations they had for students, both Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams strived to implement a structure that

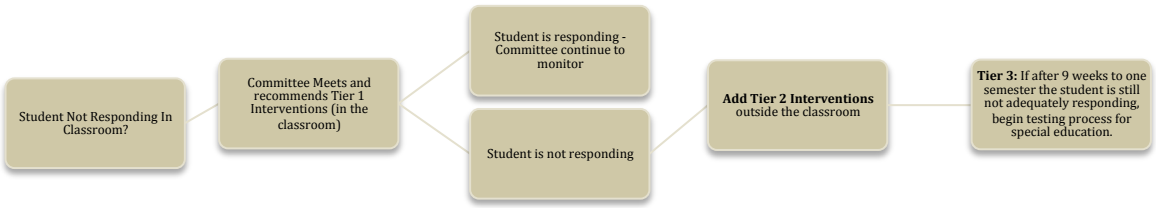
provided teachers with support, yet moved away from immediately testing a student for special education services. According to Ms. Malloy, there were still teachers at Brushwood that had not fully accepted RtI procedures and "kind of [had] the 'let's test' mentality." However, she explains that the RtI process at Brushwood was "pretty set" and that through conversation and training the campus was coming to a common understanding of identification and intervention.

Aligned with Dr. Williams's sentiment that decisions should be based on the needs of a particular student, Brushwood followed a problem-solving approach to intervention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Using this approach allowed the participants in the process to "identify and analyze problems and to help the teacher select, implement, and monitor the effectiveness of an intervention" (2006, p. 94). Ms. Malloy reinforced this by saying, "the ultimate goal is for the entire team…gen-ed…first grade…the interventionists, to be able to give them [the classroom teacher] suggestions to take back and try something new" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013).

The RtI process created at Brushwood coincided with widely accepted understandings of RtI (Shapiro, Zigmond, Wallace, & Marston, 2011), in that it followed a three-tier system. Figure 6 shows the process Brushwood Elementary created in order to respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs. When students were experiencing difficulties in the classroom, the classroom teacher brought the student up for discussion in the progress-monitoring committee (PMC). The PMC, comprised of administrators, general education teachers, and interventionists convened twice per month. The PMC made recommendations for interventions within the classroom (Tier 1). After a period of Tier 1 intervention, the committee met again to assess the student's response to the intervention. If the student was responding, the committee would continue to monitor progress. If the student was still not responding, the committee

would recommend Tier 2 interventions to take place outside the classroom while Tier 1 interventions continued. If the committee determined that the student's progress in Tier 2 was not adequate, the student might have been referred for special education testing.

Figure 6: Flowchart of Brushwood Elementary Intervention Process



Note: Created based on observations, conversations, and teacher and administrator interview data

Dyslexia as a separate category

Texas is one of a few states that separate the identification and intervention services for dyslexia from the category of specific learning disability (Youman & Mather, 2013). Students identified as dyslexic receive special instruction and accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 defines *disability* very broadly, so students who do not qualify for special education services can potentially qualify for a 504 plan with a diagnosis of dyslexia. Either teachers or parents may request a dyslexia assessment. According to *The Texas Dyslexia Handbook* (2014), "Progression through tiered intervention is not required in order to begin the identification of dyslexia…The use of a tiered process should not delay the inclusion of a student in dyslexia intervention" (p. 18). Therefore, the identification process for dyslexia at Brushwood did not require proceeding through the entire RtI process.

Since dyslexia was a category outside of special education the identification process was different, which seemed to result in a contradiction between the

administrators' pronounced belief of moving past a "let's test mentality" and the identification of students with dyslexia. Based on my observations, it seemed that dyslexia was often used as an explanation for a student's struggles at Brushwood Elementary. Ms. Malloy said in her pre-interview, "On our campus we have a high number of kiddos identified with dyslexia. That is in part because we have an awesome interventionist who is a dyslexia therapist who has trained our staff." She went on to say that, "We also have…highly educated parents who…communicate with each other…[and] parents advocate [for their child] to be tested" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013).

To initiate the dyslexia identification process, parents and teachers provided information about the student that was then discussed by the progress-monitoring committee (PMC). On average, eight students were discussed at each meeting, and a decision to administer a dyslexia screening was made for one to three of those students (Fieldnotes, November 2013 - April 2014). The dyslexia specialist (Ms. Golde) evaluated the information and administered assessments to the student, and then presented her findings and a recommendation to the PMC.

Ms. Golde was regarded by her colleagues and by parents as knowledgeable about dyslexia, so her recommendations were generally followed. Ms. Golde was also responsible for providing teachers with information about dyslexia. Thus, classroom teachers were very attuned to dyslexia as a possible explanation for a student's difficulties, as illustrated in Ms. Nelson's description of a student who was eventually identified as dyslexic:

> I noticed that his spelling was really phonetic. It was really difficult to read, and I'm used to reading dyslexic writing…it was brought up that [his] brother before him was also tested two years ago for dyslexia but did not quite make it and so it

> was not a huge surprise when [he] came up. (Teacher Interview, October 21, 2013)

The focus on dyslexia may have contributed to the district's concern about over-identification of students with dyslexia at Brushwood Elementary. Ms. Malloy explained this when she said,

> Every year we…get our hand publicly slapped at our district meetings because we have so many, I think we have 32. That's well within the national average of 5 to 20 percent of the population…but we definitely have about double what other campuses our size have identified…that's just a unique thing to our campus. (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013)

Influences on special education referrals

High-stakes testing. At the time of this study (2013 - 2014 school year), Texas had an option for students with an identified disability to take a modified version of the high-stakes test. In addition, students with dyslexia, as well as any student who had a 504 plan, or had been identified for special education services could receive testing accommodations. Ms. Malloy said that because teachers and administrators often felt pressure for students to be successful on the high stakes test, this sometimes led to over-identification of students as requiring special education services:

> I think we tend to over-identify…I think we have way more struggling learners for whatever reason than we do kiddos that need specialized curriculum…we're walking on eggshells when it comes to kiddos with standardized testing and kiddos that need a different type of test…it is one data point and I try to instill that in my teachers. (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013)

Ms. Malloy appeared to be making a distinct separation in identifying students who were struggling and those students who needed special education services, and that it was a very difficult process to decide which (modified or standard) assessment a student would take. Last, she reminded teachers that the test was "only one data point," and they needed to look at more data points when making decisions about students' achievement.

Dr. Williams shared Ms. Malloy's view that the high-stakes test was a factor in decisions about student academic growth when she said, "I think it is really a mixture of all those components [student work, classroom observations, district benchmarks]. But, yes [the state assessment] is one, but it's one of many" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). This balance between identifying students, selecting an appropriate high-stakes test for a student, meeting a student's academic needs, and providing a student with accommodations was often discussed during the progress-monitoring meetings. In support of moving away from a "let's test" mentality, accommodations were adjusted and implemented in Ms. Nelson's and Ms. White's (the general education teachers) classrooms throughout the school year (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). However, if a student failed STAAR (the state assessment), they automatically would begin to receive Tier 2 interventions the following school year.

Exercising caution. Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy, as expressed earlier, wanted to meet their students' needs, and if a student was to be identified as needing special education services, it was to be done carefully and based on many data sources. The goal of having teachers move away from a "let's test" mentality seemed to be realized according to Dr. Williams when she said, "The number of referrals, I will say, in terms of the number of frivolous referrals went down" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). She continued by saying, "the intentional work that was put forth to ensure that only the best referrals were being put forth, I think that was a collaborative effort from all of us" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). Her view that the number of referrals decreased and only the "best" referrals were being put forth was substantiated by the special education testing coordinator when she said "…our process has gotten better. We have not had any DNQ's [students who did not qualify after being referred] this year" (Fieldnotes, March 21, 2014).

Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy did not see identification as the sole goal of the RtI process, nor did they see a student's education as solely about academics. According to Dr. Williams, the interventions the students received were meant "…for the student to gain what they need, add those extra tools to their toolbox, then be able to apply them in the classroom" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). However, the attainment of the goal of "adding those extra tools to their toolbox" was complicated by many factors. In the next section, I examine the complexities of collaboration for general education and special education teachers and how these factors complicated the goal of providing students those "extra tools" that they could apply in the classroom.

Complexities of collaboration

The theme of collaboration, what it looks like, and when it should happen was a topic that was consistently brought up by Ms. Nelson and Ms. White throughout the year. Collaboration was something that Dr. Williams felt was an integral part of effectively instructing and meeting student needs. She said, "The teaming and the collaboration piece is big, and that's for our teachers and our staff members, so making sure that we have intentional opportunities for the collaboration to take place…sharing about lessons plans, about assessments, and about student work" (Administrator Interview, August 31, 2013). Kershner (2007) found that it was important that teachers have opportunities to share the knowledge they have about students with each other. Fennick and Liddy (2001) and Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) also learned that teachers, general and special education, must have dedicated time during the school day to plan together. At Brushwood, each grade level team was provided time to plan together during the school day; however, the interventionists and special education teachers did not attend these meetings. One reason for this was that the specialists' planning time did not coincide

with the grade level planning time. Another reason was that Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, was often called away from her classroom to assist with a third grade student, which caused her to miss her planning period (Teacher Interview, May 29, 2014). This lack of a coordinated time for collaboration was a continual source of frustration for Ms. Nelson and Ms. White.

The 2013-2014 school year was the first year Ms. White had students who received special education services in her classroom. She was trying to understand the communication norms between special education and her when she said, "This is my first year to have special ed. kids. I thought there would be more continuity and collaboration, and there's not, but I've…been informed that this is not a typical year [usually Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, had more time to meet and discuss students]…I'm hoping that that's going to change" (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013). During the school year, communication between special education and Ms. White and Ms. Nelson did not improve. Both teachers felt that Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, did not have time to talk to them except for "fly-by conversations" (hallway conversations) and was not responsive to their requests to collaborate. The following conversation occurred during a progress-monitoring meeting when Ms. White brought up her concern regarding the lack of collaboration to Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy. In attendance were Dr. Williams, Ms. Malloy, several fourth grade teachers, intervention teachers, and Ms. Golde, the dyslexia specialist; Ms. Wakeman did not attend these meetings.

Ms. White: Will there be another special ed. teacher next year to work with the fourth graders? I do not think an ARD [Admission, Review, and Dismissal] is the right place to talk about this. This is the first year I have had special education kids in

my classroom and I do not know how this is supposed to work, but I am frustrated. There seems to be a lack of coordination between what is being taught in special ed. and in my classroom. I also think that the schedule the students are following is doing them a disservice. I think these kids need continuity.

Dr. Williams: I understand. The schedule is jam-packed.

Teacher: A few years ago a special ed. person would come to our planning time so they would know what was going on.

Ms. White: I just think that the kids need continuity. (Fieldnotes, March 21, 2014)

Dr. Williams did not respond after this exchange, and it did not appear that Ms. White's concern was addressed. However, the conversation continued outside of the meeting and Ms. White felt that some of her concerns were addressed (Fieldnotes, April 9, 2014). Dr. Williams said that another special education teacher would be added the next year and that that should provide for more collaboration time. Ms. White's concern was two-fold: a) the lack of instructional collaboration; and b) continuity of instruction for students.

Even though collaboration was important to Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy, there was not a regularly planned time when special education, gifted, and general education teachers and interventionists could plan and discuss students except for a once-a-month staff meeting. Also, their vision regarding collaboration and the classroom teachers' differed. When asked about time for collaboration among these different teachers, Dr. Williams responded, "I think our hope is that it will happen naturally and informally. [We have a] meeting that is strictly devoted to professional development…having the conversations about differentiation and bringing in work samples…having intentional

conversations each month within our staff meeting" (Administrator Interview, May 28, 2014). Ms. Nelson and Ms. White were looking for a forum for collaboration that was more frequent and specific than a once-a-month professional development staff meeting. Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie's (2007) synthesis of co-teaching research supports these classroom teachers' experience. They found that administrative support was necessary for the successful implementation of collaborative models of instruction.

One aspect of the social identification of students at Brushwood happened within the very structured process of the progress-monitoring meetings. Another more organic process of identification happened in the classroom, particularly during the daily intervention time when teachers addressed specific students with specific needs. Together these processes support Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory that there is a relationship between the external world of socially recognized categories (i.e., dyslexia, specific learning disabilities) of identifying students and the internal world of the classroom where student actions are interpreted. In the next section, I discuss results in relationship to the internal world of the classroom and zoom in on how teachers' beliefs influenced instruction and student identity, classroom context influenced social identification, and the complexities of meeting student needs.

CONTEXTUAL AND TEACHER INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION

Wortham (2004, 2006) found that the classroom context he studied reinforced socio-historical categories of identity, and those categories became relevant to the social identification of the students in that classroom. Similar to Wortham's findings, the data from my study support the theory that the ways teachers constructed their classroom and their beliefs about instruction directly influenced and contributed to the social identification of students. In the following sections, I present findings that demonstrate

how teacher beliefs intertwined with student identity and learning. Then, I discuss the nonverbal and verbal messages that socially identified students across the different kinds of classrooms in which the students in my study learned. Last, I discuss the complexities the teachers in this study faced in meeting their students' needs.

Intertwining of teacher beliefs on student identity and learning

Wortham (2004) suggests that the "intertwining of local cognitive models and models of identity may be a robust mechanism of the mutual constitution of social identification and learning" (p. 745). In examining the classroom and intervention teachers' beliefs about learning and the instruction provided in their classrooms, there was evidence to support the concept that local cognitive models and models of identity influenced the social identification and learning of students. There were distinct differences in the teachers' beliefs about instruction that influenced student identity and learning. For this section of the discussion, I separate the findings into those regarding the classroom teachers and those regarding the specialists.

Classroom teachers: Students as capable and self-reliant learners

Both Ms. Nelson and Ms. White believed that all students could learn, and advocated throughout the year for more continuity in the learning of their students who were pulled from their classroom. In addition, both teachers were aligned with the district and administrators' philosophy of teaching literacy through a reading and writing workshop model. Ms. Nelson said,

> I believe that reading and writing go hand in hand…I think that both take time…you don't get good at it unless you do it…I think it's super important that a teacher knows their kids so that they know how to get them, how to get them interested in something." (Teacher Interview, October 21, 2013)

The workshop model provided students with some autonomy—they had choice regarding what they read, the topics they wrote about, and where in the classroom they read and wrote. Structuring reading and writing as a workshop socially identified all students as capable individuals and self-reliant learners. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White differentiated their instruction to meet each student's needs through conferencing and by regularly providing any documented accommodations (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). Reading was important to both of these teachers, but because of the state assessment, there was greater emphasis on writing. As the year progressed students were given prompts to write from, rather than having complete freedom to write about whatever they wanted. Even though there was an emphasis on writing, book clubs and/or independent reading time and reading conferences occurred daily. It was important to Ms. White and Ms. Nelson that their students knew that they wanted to teach each of them, to help them grow socially and academically. Ms. White articulated this when she said,

> I want the kids to know the reason I'm here is because I'm here to teach them. And so if they knew everything about everything, then I wouldn't have a job. So you know, by them having things they need to work on, I don't portray it as a negative thing. This is just individualized per student…so, we really try to focus on those strengths first so when we do have an area that needs to be…worked on, they don't necessarily look at it as a weakness. So, I have these strengths, but there's other things that I need to work on. (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013)

These two classroom teachers' beliefs about how to teach students and teaching from each student's strengths positioned the students as capable learners. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White looked past the institutional labels a student was given, and stayed true to their belief that teaching using a reading and writing workshop model would meet each of their students' academic needs. As the year progressed, evidence of their reflective and differentiated practice grew.

Ms. White openly shared with her students her thinking regarding making her instruction and her expectations relevant to each of them. The following example occurred right after the holiday break. Ms. White shared with her students her reflections regarding their use of the expository essay writing plan she had taught them, which required them to brainstorm ideas, outline the body of an essay, and write a concluding statement. She said,

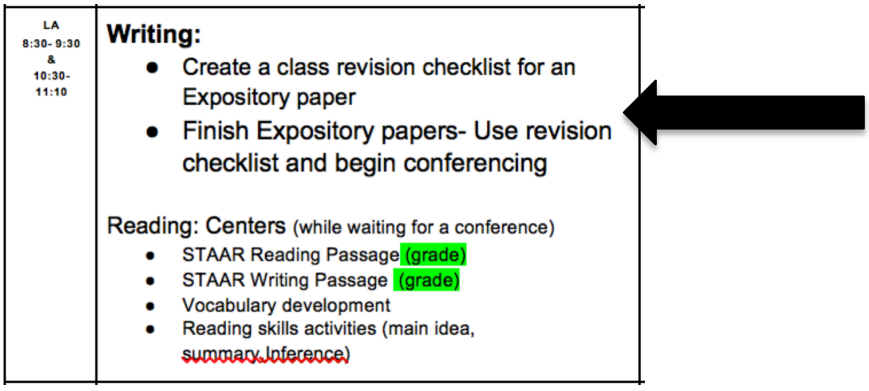
> I have done a lot of soul searching over the break. I knew this, but it was just easier to have you all plan in the same way…some of you are struggling with this. Not all of you need to plan in the same way…. If this plan makes sense to you [*the one she taught them*] then use it. If not, it can be bubbles, a list…[However], you have to plan. You are not getting out of planning. (Fieldnotes, January 7, 2014)

In this example, Ms. White recognized that the prewriting plan she taught was not beneficial for all of her students. She explained her thinking and "soul searching" to them and provided alternatives, yet stressed that they must plan. Ms. White positioned her students as writers, and as writers they had to make decisions about what method of planning would serve them best.

A workshop model not only allowed for differentiation within a classroom, but also across the fourth grade classrooms. Making plans that were flexible for each teacher and their classroom of students was important to this fourth grade team. During planning sessions, the teachers often discussed creating flexible plans in order to meet their students' needs. Ms. White and another fourth grade teacher were responsible for creating the language arts plans every week. On Thursdays, the entire team met and plans were reviewed and discussed. On February 20, 2014 I noticed a decided shift in the lesson plans toward a greater focus on the state assessment (STAAR); however, lesson plans were created that provided options so that each teacher could choose activities with which they felt her students needed practice and instruction. During the planning

meeting on February 20, 2014, Ms. White expressed that her students needed work on "vocabulary development." Other teachers thought their students were doing well on vocabulary and did not need additional practice in this area. Another teacher felt more time needed to be spent on reading strategies, such as "making inferences and main idea." At the end of their meeting, Ms. White told her team, "what we are presenting here are options…each of you will decide if your students need them or not" (Fieldnotes, February 20, 2014). Figure 7 shows the plans for language arts for the week of February 24-28, 2014. In addition to providing instructional options for each teacher, the plans call for each class to create a revision checklist for the students' expository paper. Across the school year there was a common practice of creating checklists with the students. This practice shows the teachers' belief that students should have a voice in their learning, and that students are capable.

Figure 7: Language Arts Lesson Plans For February 24 – 28, 2014



Overall, Ms. Nelson's and Ms. White's beliefs were instrumental in how they approached students and their instruction. Reading and writing workshop provided flexibility in meeting each student's instructional needs. They both shared their thinking with their students about instruction and included students in the process of making

decisions about what worked best for them. Lastly, their beliefs about differentiation influenced the lesson plans for the entire team by providing options rather than a one-sized-fits-all approach.

Specialists: Teacher-led instruction and focus on specific skills

The three specialists, Ms. Golde, Ms. Winston, and Ms. Wakeman, all felt that the students they taught needed very specific types of skills, and all of their instruction was teacher-led, with very little room for discussion. Both Ms. Golde and Ms. Wakeman believed that their students needed to learn to read, which meant an ability to decode words, and therefore their reading instruction was phonics-based. Ms. Winston was hired to teach reading strategies that students would use so they could be successful on the state assessment.

Ms. Wakeman articulated her beliefs by saying, "When I was in general ed. I was all about reading and writing workshop…special ed. is different…in general ed. you do guided reading groups, but you don't hit on the phonemic awareness like these kids need" (Teacher Interview, May 28, 2014). Based on this belief, much of Ms. Wakeman's reading instruction for her students identified as having a learning disability, centered on discrete decoding skills. Writing instruction was predominantly teacher-driven with very little student participation or time for students actually to write. For example,

> **Ms. Wakeman:** OK, yesterday we started a plan for our 'Favorite time of year.' Today, I want to talk about conclusion. Please look at the end of your informational organizer…If my topic is summer, then I would start it [her paper] by addressing the prompt. I would write: 'Summer is my favorite time of year'. Some just say, 'The End' at the end. But a

conclusion sentence would be something like [pause]…After…[then she turns and looks at the students] you see what I'm doing – I'm stopping and thinking—that's what writers do when the words aren't coming. I don't like 'after' so I'm going to erase it.

Bob: After summer we will be in fifth grade. [he suggested]

Ms. Wakeman: *Does not respond. She continues to think and then writes on the board.*

Ms. Wakeman: I just wrote a quick one and writers will go back to it and change it. [She had written 'I can't wait until summer' on the board]. You can just think and write a concluding sentence. Okay, we are going to have some quiet time so you can finish your plan. And remember part of writing is thinking. I'm going to work on a plan too. (Fieldnotes, March 18, 2014)

At this point in the lesson, the students began writing, and as they wrote, Ms. Wakeman checked in and reviewed their plan. The students were given approximately six minutes to work on their plan and then they were stopped and asked if they would like to share. Ms. Wakeman told the students that thinking was an important part of writing, yet she provided them with little time to do either writing or thinking. When Bob (a focal student) tried to make a suggestion for a concluding sentence he was ignored—his suggestion was not considered or discussed. There was little space made for student voices and discussion in Ms. Wakeman's room. Every Friday, she would provide time for each student to share something personal (i.e., what they were going to do that weekend). The only other times the students talked, rather than responded to Ms. Wakeman's questions, was during their five minute breaks (these occurred after every twenty-five minutes of work).

Occasionally Ms. Wakeman's routine would be broken because her students were participating in a general education classroom activity. One example of this was when the students participated in Reading Restaurant, a classroom project that happened in December, 2013. Students practiced reading a book in preparation for reading it to younger students who would come to their classroom, have a snack, and listen to a story. The students in Ms. Nelson's and Ms. White's classrooms got to pick the book they wanted to read, except for those students who received reading instruction with Ms. Wakeman: she selected the book for them. The book Bob (a focal student) and his partner were given to read was *The Jacket I Wear In The Snow* by Shirley Neitzel and Nancy Winslow Parker. Further, Ms. Wakeman instructed them that they would take turns reading each page. During the times when Bob and his partner practiced in Ms. Nelson's room, Bob's partner was reluctant. He said, "This is too easy…I don't want to read to the kids" (Fieldnotes, December 12, 2013). Bob tried to encourage him and read his own part with confidence and expression. On the morning of the Reading Restaurant, Bob and his partner helped their classmates prepare the room for their visitors (see Figure 8). When it was time for them to read their book, Bob's partner refused. Ms. Nelson coaxed him into reading by reading with him. After a few pages he began reading more on his own; however it was hard to hear him (Fieldnotes, December 18, 2013).

Figure 8: Ms. Nelson's Room on the Day of Reading Restaurant

In this example, Ms. Wakeman did not seem to believe that Bob and his partner were capable of selecting their own books, and Bob's partner appeared to be embarrassed by having to read a book he considered "too easy." He (Bob's partner) did not seem to understand that everyone in his class was reading a picture book—or a book he considered "too easy" because he had missed the discussion about how to choose a book and why they were reading to the younger students. In this way, Ms. Wakeman's beliefs about instruction and her perceptions of Bob and his partner's cognition further contributed to their social identification as students with a learning disability.

Ms. Golde (the dyslexia specialist) had similar beliefs as Ms. Wakeman about the type of instruction her students required. When asked about her beliefs about teaching literacy, Ms. Golde responded, "Since I have been trained with the dyslexia, I have a different view of it now. I teach by syllable types and multi-sensory, and so my whole

approach has changed since I see how the dyslexia works…teaching them strategies to decode words" (Teacher Interview, May 27, 2014). The instruction in Ms. Golde's classroom was fast-paced, students were expected to respond in very particular ways, and instruction was focused on learning how to decode words. Providing students with tools so that they could read was very important to Ms. Golde. She said her ultimate goal was to build her students' self-esteem. She also wanted students to "find books and things that they like to read" (Teacher Interview, May 27, 2014). In order for students to access books, Ms. Golde provided each student with a *Learning Ally* account. Through *Learning Ally,* students had access to an extensive collection of audio textbooks and literature. However, during her class, she made no space for students to read or discuss what they were reading. I knew she was interested in what they were reading because I often observed her asking students in the hallway, "What are you reading?" (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). Ms. Golde also talked to parents in order to get their support of L*earning Ally* and to find out what her students were interested in so that she could recommend books. Within the walls of her classroom, though, the focus was on decoding skills. Ms. Golde missed opportunities to discuss with her students directly about what they were reading, to extend their comprehension through discussion, and to help them connect what they were learning in her classroom to the reading of books. Through her focus on decoding skills and by having her students participate by responding in very prescribed ways, she contributed to their social identification as students with dyslexia; however, this interpretation is complicated by the fact that she also wanted her students to read books and gave them a tool to access books.

There was some tension for Ms. Winston, an interventionist, regarding how she was directed to instruct her groups. The group that I observed her teaching was comprised of students (including Sam, a focal student) who had not been successful on the STAAR reading assessment the prior year (2012-2013). She and the administrators of the school believed that "all children can learn…and they [the administrators] work really hard to provide services for students at every level" (Teacher Interview, May 8 & 28, 2014). Tensions arose for Ms. Winston in the implementation of how to meet the academic needs of the students in her group. She said,

> I would like to do more book studies and finding main idea and doing more real world application, but we don't have a lot of time…we were told this year that they [the administrators] wanted us to literally have like [test] passages in front of us every day and that's what we were to be doing. (Teacher Interview, May 8 & 28, 2014)

This situation seemed to be incongruous with the stated beliefs of the administrators regarding the type of instruction they expected: using a reading and writing workshop model for literacy instruction. However, in her interview, as previously described, when asked about differentiation, Ms. Malloy said, "The ideal is that all of our teachers are differentiating for all of the kiddos that are left that don't have an imposed label or need and we're really trying to focus teaching on what's effective" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). This statement assumes that once a student was labeled the instruction they received from the specialist was differentiated to meet their particular learning needs. It also supports research that has shown that struggling students often experience direct and explicit teaching of discrete skills (Trent,

Artilles, & Englert, 1998). This leads me into a discussion of the contextual messages in the classrooms that influenced student learning and social identification.

Contextual messages that influence learning

The focal students in this study had to navigate several academic classroom contexts each day. Each context sent different messages that influenced student learning as well as their social identification. Findings are presented from data collected in five different contexts: (a) the two fourth grade classrooms; (b) the dyslexia classroom; (c) the special education classroom; and (d) the reading interventionist classroom. These messages were present in two forms: (a) the unspoken, yet visible reinforcement of ability and disability; and (b) the classroom language of social identification.

Unspoken, yet visible reinforcement of ability and disability

Wortham (2004) found that the socio-historical portrayal of boys, particularly African-American males, as disinterested in school and less likely to succeed in school and life became relevant to the social identification of students in Ms. Bailey's classroom (p. 722). The boys were routinely identified as "unpromising" and the girls were identified as "promising." These stereotyped suppositions based on gender became the classroom-local categories of identity. In my study, the historical presuppositions of disability and ability were present in all of the classrooms and influenced the local categories of identity in a myriad of ways. Factors that influenced the messages of ability and disability included the materials on the walls, the set-up of the classroom, and the schedule of instruction.

Fourth Grade Classrooms. Ms. White's and Ms. Nelson's fourth grade classrooms looked like many classrooms, with books and posters on the walls, and, upon examination, there were visible, yet unspoken messages regarding what was valued in

these classrooms. These messages contributed to the social identification of the students. Figure 9 shows a portion of Ms. White's classroom.

Figure 9: Corner of Ms. White's Classroom

As can be seen, reading was valued in this classroom, as demonstrated by the book shelves filled with text. Shelves filled with books were on three of the walls in this classroom. Ms. Nelson's room also had a large classroom library that was easily accessible to the students. Reading was important to both of these teachers, and was exemplified by Ms. Nelson when she said, "I love children's literature, and so I feel that's one of my assets is that I can talk to my kids about what is out there [and] what I think they might like" (Teacher Interview, October, 21, 2013). Wide reading of children's literature was also one of Ms. White's strengths. Having large libraries and being

knowledgeable of the types of books their students would be interested in reading sent the message that reading was valued and that the students were readers.

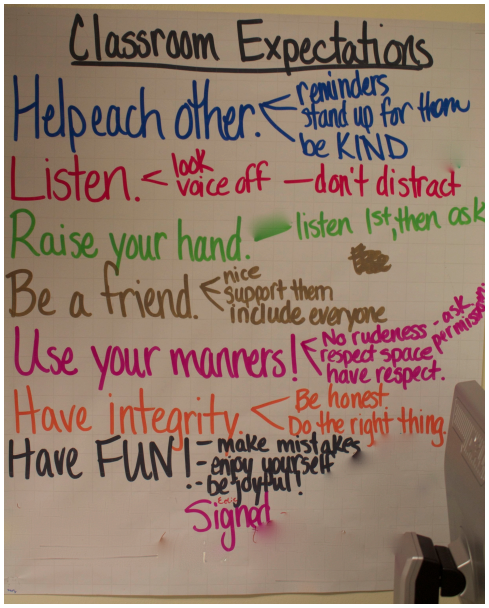
The work visible on the walls sent three messages: (a) reading and writing go hand-in-hand; (b) learning is a social activity; and (c) student work is valued. The banners hanging from the ceiling in Ms. White's room provide examples of particular writing tools students could use in their writing (i.e., similes). These examples came from previous students' writing, books students were reading, and from read-alouds. When the teachers read aloud to the students, they continually asked the students to listen for and point out the writing tools they noticed the author using, as well as to listen to the story and participate in the discussion (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - April 2014). Another example of Ms. White's and Ms. Nelson's understanding of the relationship between reading and writing was the letter in the right hand corner of Figure 9. This letter was written to Ms. White by a student in response to *There's A Boy In the Girls' Bathroom* by Louis Sachar, the first read-aloud of the 2013-2014 school year. The girl who wrote the letter tells Ms. White that she was enjoying the book, she talks about events in the book that surprised her and made her laugh, and she ends with, "I am dying to finish this book. I am so curious to see what will happen." This student used writing as a way to express her understandings of the book, and to convey a message to her teacher that she was enjoying the read aloud. By putting this letter on the wall, under the heading of "reading," Ms. White shows that she values student opinion and that writing has many purposes, one of which is to express an interpretation of a book.

Another message that was clearly visible in Ms. White's and Ms. Nelson's classrooms was that learning was a social activity. In Figure 9 a claw foot bathtub filled with pillows was located under the window. Three to four students at a time would gather in the bathtub during independent reading time. Some sat on the edges, others sat

inside, and still others would sit on the floor in front of it (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). During these times the students would read and then one would stop and share an exciting part of their book, and a conversation would start. The sharing of books and talking about books was encouraged in both of these classrooms and occurred daily. The composition of the desks also created a visual message of learning as a social activity, as well as an individual responsibility. Each student had an individual desk that provided for easy rearrangement. The desks were grouped differently on a regular basis, and usually coincided with the needs of a particular project the students would be working on. This flexible grouping of students and arrangement of desks not only let students know that learning is social, but also let them know they were a community of learners.

The concept of the classroom as a community was important to both teachers. An example of this was the classroom expectations created by Ms. Nelson and her students at the beginning of the year. Figure 10 shows that community and including everyone was valued and expected in this classroom.

Figure 10: Ms. Nelson's Classroom Expectations



Ms. Nelson and the students created this list of classroom expectations together during the first week of school. There are seven expectations, and then sub-categories for each one. As the students shared their ideas, they were added to the chart and the student responsible for the idea signed their name next to the item. At the bottom, the rest of the students signed their names, along with Ms. Nelson. This chart demonstrates that this classroom was a community, that they are responsible individually and together for the wellbeing and learning of the community. Ms. White would take time approximately once a week for students to share about their family life and discuss whatever was on their minds. The unspoken messages in Ms. White's and Ms. Nelson's classrooms were ones of capability—rooms where people came together to learn, to share, to read and write, and to support one another.

Specialists' Classrooms. The unspoken messages in the reading intervention, dyslexia, and special education classroom were ones of disability, as well as ability. Figures 11, 12, and 13 are pictures of these classrooms.

Figure 11: The Special Education Classroom

Figure 12: The Dyslexia Classroom

Figure 13: The Reading Intervention Classroom

All materials on the boards in these classrooms were selected by the teachers and were there to remind the students of what they were learning. For example, in Figure 11, Ms. Wakeman (the special education teacher) put up three cards: subject, predicate, and object, a list of prefixes, and a list of suffixes. The writing lesson for that day was about subjects, predicates, and objects (Fieldnotes, September 11, 2013), and these cards supported the students by giving them visual clues as they determined what were the subjects, predicates, and objects of sentences Ms. Wakeman wrote on the board. Figure 12 provides an example of the visuals in Ms. Golde's (the dyslexia teacher) classroom, which emphasized the rules/patterns of spelling. These rules were posted and were often referenced by the teacher when a student would not decode a word correctly. The visuals in the room sent the message that reading was the learning of discrete skills. Ms. Winston's room had very little on the walls; she did have some books on shelves, but they were never referenced or used during her instruction. Figure 13 shows that her desks were arranged in a horseshoe so that all students had a clear line of sight to the screen at the front of the room. A testing passage or a PowerPoint that stepped students through a specific reading strategy was projected on the screen. The visuals in Ms. Winston's (the interventionist) room told the students that it was important to pass the state high-stakes assessment and that they were not progressing at the same rate as their peers. The visual messages sent in each of the specialists' classrooms were very different messages about capability than those sent in the general education classrooms.

One factor that influenced the context of these three classrooms was that groups of four to six students—based on grade, level, and instructional need—rotated in and out in 30-45 minute increments for specific intervention instruction. As the groups of students came into one of these rooms, they would sit at a kidney-shaped table or in a horseshoe so they could see each other. Conversation between students was limited in

these contexts, and the instruction was skill-based and teacher-driven. In Ms. Wakeman's classroom (special education), the students worked with the teacher for 25 minutes followed by a five-minute break. In the dyslexia and reading interventionist classrooms, the teachers (Ms. Golde and Ms. Winston respectively) led the instruction for the entire 45 minutes without a break. There were few opportunities observed for students to work independently in these classrooms, and there were no observed collaborative experiences with Ms. Golde and Ms. Winston (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - April 2014).

In the classrooms for specialized instruction (intervention, special education), students come for short periods of time and to learn a targeted skill. Ms. Nelson recognized this in her response to an interview question regarding how she saw the instruction students received from a specialist versus the instruction received in her classroom. She said, "In my experience in working with different interventionists for different things, they're working on a very specific set, and it's not all-encompassing like what I'm doing in the classroom" (Teacher Interview, October 21, 2013). The difference of instructional purpose influenced the messages sent in the various classrooms and also influenced how socio-historical categories of identity manifested as local identities (Wortham, 2004). In the specialists' classrooms, each student was socially identified as needing help in very specific ways, versus in the general classroom where each student's needs were met in a flexible and more personally affirming manner. Also, the structure of learning in these classrooms seemed to send an unspoken message that the students were not capable of independent or collaborative work.

The classroom language of social identification

The language used by each of the teachers with students had many similarities, but also had components of difference that contributed to the categories of identification

present in each classroom context. All of the teachers, general classroom and specialists, were positive with the students and referred to students using their first names. However, there were examples of language that teachers used consistently that reinforced categories of social identification. The use of the terms "dyslexic" and "smart" as presented below demonstrate how students were positioned and identified across classroom contexts, and the importance of teachers' language, which will be further discussed in the focal student case studies.

Smart. Dweck (2000) found in her studies of children who viewed the world through an entity theory lens (that intelligence is a fixed trait) that they would explain their peers' success in terms of their intelligence: they succeeded because they were smart (p. 75). Johnston (2012), using Dweck's theories as a framework, viewed descriptors, such as "smart," as "invitations to fixed-performance thinking" (p. 19). Individuals who take up this perspective have the potential to form stereotypes and to focus on confirmations of their stereotypes while ignoring information that disconfirms their stereotypes. Johnston posited that a fixed-performance perspective about student characteristics "is institutionalized in some views of teaching" (p. 19). In contrast, when an individual holds an incremental theory (Dweck) or dynamic-learning frame (Johnston), they believe that "the more you learn, the smarter you get. You can change your mind, your smartness, and who you become" (Johnston, p. 17). There was prevalent use of the word *smart* across contexts, and having a child identified as *gifted* was important to the parents of Brushwood and was an integral part of the school culture. The concept of *smart* or *gifted* set up a dichotomy that an individual was either *smart* or *not smart—gifted* or *not gifted*. At Brushwood Elementary, teachers used the term *smart* to describe students' abilities in a variety of contexts. Also, the concept of being smart was used in the naming of rewards such as *smart beads* and *smarties*. Below I examine the

use of the term *smart* by the teachers at Brushwood and discuss how it contributed to the social identification of students.

Smart was often used as a descriptor during the progress-monitoring meetings. Teachers seemed to use this term during these meetings so that the student was not viewed only from the perspective of the struggle they were experiencing. Describing a student as *smart* seemed to be viewed by the teachers as something positive. For example, during a progress-monitoring meeting, Ms. White brought up her concerns regarding a male student's handwriting and asked the committee to include a typing accommodation in his 504 plan. She told the committee, "He is so smart, I do not have academic concerns" (Fieldnotes, November 1, 2013). This example seemed to indicate that Ms. White did not want the committee to identify this boy only as a student who had poor handwriting. She provided another dimension to his abilities by stating that he was *smart,* and seemed to be positioning him away from any possibility that he could be thought of as *not smart*. Ms. White seemed to be arguing that there was more to this boy than just being a student who had illegible handwriting. In addition to describing students as smart during the progress-monitoring meetings, teachers also used this descriptor during interviews.

During my first interview with Ms. White, which occurred after the progress-monitoring meeting, she brought up one of the boys described above who had illegible handwriting. She said, "More can be done for [him] because he's a very smart boy, but you know, I feel like there needs to be some more documentation for him just with this handwriting and kind of some of his social emotional" (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013). Also, during the school year she would make sure to let me know how he was performing academically. In addition, she wanted his peers to see him as successful. At the beginning of December, the fourth grade students took several district benchmarks to

see how they were performing academically. Ms. White (and all of the fourth grade teachers) provided time during class for students to make corrections before the class went over the questions students missed. Before she handed out the reading benchmarks for the students to correct, she said, "[Student name], would you please stand in your chair. [He] is the only one who missed zero in the class. You can pick out an affirmation" (Fieldnotes, December 17, 2013). He selected "round of applause" from a poster that had affirmation choices, and while he stood in his chair, everyone else stood up and gave him a round of applause.

In her interview, Ms. Golde, the dyslexia specialist, talked about the importance of students believing that they are "smart." She said,

> Teaching them strategies to decode words, and show them how you can do this…you're very smart, and all that. I think they have to have success to believe…but if they feel like they're not readers or they're not smart, there's not much I can do until I fix that part. (Teacher Interview, May 27, 2014)

In this example, Ms. Golde seemed to want to show students that by trying and taking on challenges, and finding some success, they may feel more capable. Changing a student's view of their ability to learn was a priority for Ms. Golde: she felt that this was the first thing she needed to accomplish with her students.

The topic of being smart came up often in Ms. Wakeman's resource classroom. Johnston (2012) stated "students classified as having learning disabilities are more likely to adopt a fixed frame with respect to ability than are students classified as not having disabilities" (p. 16). The students in Ms. Wakeman's class did appear to hold a fixed conception of their ability, even when Ms. Wakeman pushed back. In this example, Bob wanted to know when they (the students) are going to be smart.

Ms. Wakeman: Open up to p. 57. It is on the board. We are just going to be doing just one more type of syllable—open and then your reading is really going to take off.

Bob: Then we are going to be smart? You said that at the end of this year we were going to be smart.

Ms. Wakeman: You are always smart. I said that at the end of this year you are going to know a whole lot more and that your reading is going to get better. (Fieldnotes, May 16, 2014)

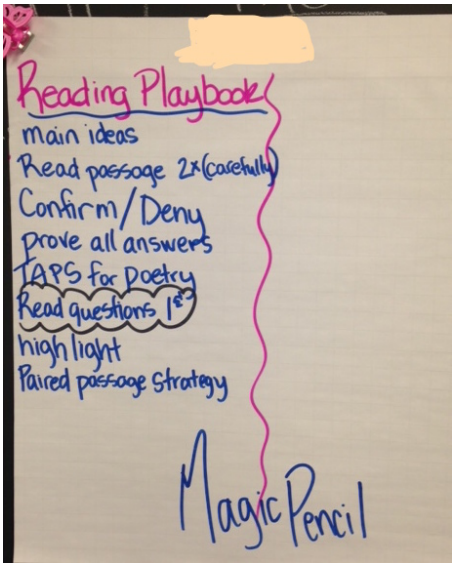
Ms. Wakeman attempted to tell Bob (a focal student from Ms. Nelson's classroom) that he was smart and that as he learned more his reading was going to improve. However, she quickly moved on with the lesson and did not address his concerns or perceptions about being *smart* fully.

Not only was the word *smart* used to describe students; it was also used in naming rewards. Ms. White would give students *smart beads* (a bead necklace) when they answered a question, added to a discussion, or did something in their work that she felt was *smart*. For example, the fourth grade students were working on revising introductions. Ms. White shared Sam's (a focal student) revision with the class. First, she read the original introduction, then the revision, and pointed out to the class what Sam had done and why she thought it was a good example of revision. When she was done, the class clapped, and Ms. White told Sam to get some *smart beads* (Fieldnotes, February, 20, 2014). When a student earned *smart beads,* it was a visual reminder for that entire day that the student had said or done something *smart*.

As the state assessment approached, the fourth grade teachers decided that they would give students *smarties* (the candy) for showing their use of reading strategies on the practice passages (Team Meeting Notes, February 13, 2014). As the students prepared for the assessment, there was a great deal of discussion and instruction about reading strategies and the creation of a "Playbook" (see Figure 14). In this example, the students

were finishing up their independent work on a reading passage, and they were spread out across the room working in spots they found comfortable.

Figure 14: Reading Test Playbook



Ms. White: Come back to your seats. (*She waits a few minutes for the students to return to their desks.)* Did you write main ideas next to some of them? We are going to do a [testing] playbook after specials. So this is something you should be doing all of the time. Who did this? Did you do it all of the time?

Students: *Many raise their hands*.

Ms. White: For those of you that did it all of the time, you can get some smarties. (Fieldnotes, April 21, 2014)

The fourth grade teachers were encouraging the students to use the reading strategies they had been taught, but also seemed to be sending a message that to do so was something that was *smart* to do. This message was being sent not only by the giving of an extrinsic reward, but also through the name of the reward—*smarties*.

Ms. Nelson's rarely used the term "smart" in her class, and when she did she used it as a reminder to a student that being smart does not mean they can rush through their work. In this example, Ms. Nelson was conferencing with a female student, an avid reader and writer, about her narrative.

> **Ms. Nelson:** Would you please get your prompt page with your checklist?
>
> **Student:** *Gets the page*.
>
> **Ms. Nelson:** I am upset because you have not written a complete checklist and your narrative does not address the prompt. You are smart, but you have to take the time to read the prompt out loud in your head. And then you must make a checklist to make sure you are addressing the prompt. (Fieldnotes, March 25, 2014)

This student usually presented herself as very confident and capable in the classroom by participating in the discussions and answering many of Ms. Nelson's questions (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). In this example, Ms. Nelson seemed to want to reassure the student that she saw her as smart; however, she also wanted her to slow down and use some of the tools she had been taught in order to write a successful narrative. Another interpretation is that Ms. Nelson felt that being seen as *smart* was an important aspect to this student's identity, and she did not want her to question this, but instead wanted her to focus on making her writing stronger.

Each of the teachers in these examples used the term *smart* in different ways, but also reinforced the idea that an individual was either smart or not smart to their students. This was done through their language as well as through the rewards they gave. Extending the discussion of how specific language contributed to the social identification and positioning of students, I next present findings related to the use of the term *dyslexia*.

Dyslexia. Similarly to the use of the term *smart*, *dyslexia* or *dyslexic* was a term often used by the teachers. As Johnston (2012) and Dweck (2000) theorized, the use of these terms can lead to viewing students as having a fixed trait, rather than as having the ability to change. There was prevalent use of the term *dyslexia* in the progress-monitoring meetings when discussing students, but it was not used by Ms. White and Ms. Nelson in their classrooms and conversations with students. Ms. Winston, the reading interventionist, and Ms. Golde used the term with students as a way of explaining to them why they made a particular miscue when reading or as a reason why they needed an accommodation. A few days before the state assessment, Ms. Winston was reviewing with one of her groups the reading strategies she had taught them to use while taking the test. Some of the students were expressing their anxiety about taking the test, and Ms. Winston told them, "You are all capable of doing well on this test. It is just a small test. You are all going to be fine. Just remember your strategies and all that we have learned." Sam (a focal student) asked her about a teacher reading him the answer choices on the test, and Ms. Winston replied, "You are dyslexic so you have different accommodations than other students" (Fieldnotes, April 21, 2014). She then continued on with the lesson, and Sam participated. Not all students in Ms. Winston's group were identified as dyslexic, but everyone in the classroom now knew that Sam was a student with dyslexia. It did not appear to bother him because he continued to answer questions and was actively engaged in the remainder of the lesson; however, it is unknown as to what he was thinking or feeling internally, or what his classmates were thinking. Ms. Winston's

use of the term *dyslexic* may not have outwardly affected Sam because he heard Ms. Golde say "dyslexia" or "dyslexic" often when he was in her classroom.

Ms. Golde often blamed dyslexia as the culprit when a student would make a mistake during a lesson. These next few conversations are examples of how Ms. Golde brought the term *dyslexia* into her teaching practice.

> **Student**: (*She makes several attempts spelling the word "tribal"*) t-i-r-b-l-e, t-r-i-b-e-l, t-r-i-b-l-e…
>
> **Ms. Golde:** Get that dyslexia out of there…that is what happens with dyslexia, you put those extra letters in there. (Fieldnotes, February 4, 2014)

The lesson continued, as each student took turns spelling words. In this next example, the students had just come into the room; Ms. Golde gave them words to spell and reminded them of the spelling rules they should be using. After they had time to write the word a student would spell it aloud. The words were bloom, bamboo, poodle, lampoon, and the following occurred during the spelling of igloo.

> **Student:** i-g-o-o-l
>
> **Ms. Golde**: That is a dyslexia thing, switching it around. (Fieldnotes, January 8, 2014)

Again, Ms. Golde was pointing out to the student that the reason he misspelled "igloo" was because he had dyslexia and that individuals with dyslexia switch letters around. Later, during this same lesson, Ms. Golde asked the students to open up their workbook and then said, "These words can be tricky—especially with dyslexia—but many students have problems with these too." She then asked the students to take turns reading the word pairs on their workbook page. An example of the word pairs that the students were

reading is "Brad – Bard." As a student orally read the words, if they made an error, Ms. Golde would say, "That is tricky for a lot of kids, but with dyslexia it is even more tricky" (Fieldnotes, January 8, 2014). In each of these examples, Ms. Golde was telling the students that the reason why they switched letters or added extra letters as they spelled words was because of their dyslexia. There are many possible ways to interpret why Ms. Golde explained to her students that the cause of their misspellings was because of their dyslexia. One possible interpretation is that her constant reminder to students of their dyslexia will become a local identifier that will become a way students' peers think of them and how the students socially identify themselves (Wortham, 2004). Another is that the identification as a person with dyslexia becomes intertwined with and could facilitate or stymie learning. A third interpretation is that Ms. Golde wanted her students to know the cause of their struggle and that with perseverance and hard work they could learn strategies that would help them read. In the last example, she made a point to tell her students that students with and without dyslexia have difficulty with spelling certain types of words. The commonality across these interpretations is that the local identification of dyslexia was intertwined with student learning and had the potential to influence a student's perception of self. In order to understand fully the influence of Ms. Golde's repeated use of the term *dyslexia* on her students, data from other contexts must be considered and student voices must be presented. Students' views of their identity and how the language teachers used contributed to it are discussed in Chapter 5, during the presentation of three student case studies.

Complexities of meeting student needs

Ms. Nelson and Ms. White continuously reflected on how best to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. This complexity of teaching was something they wrestled with daily. When Ms. Nelson was asked how she managed what students were missing in class with the instruction they were getting from the interventionists, she replied, "It's really difficult. I feel like I'm constantly doing a dance of—I feel like I'm constantly making these critical decisions on what can this student can miss out on this time that they'll probably get somewhere else." She went on to say,

> I think that we're sending a message to the kids about what's important, and so we need to be really, really careful. I think we have to be very specific when we talk to them about you weren't here for this, and so I'm not going to hold you responsible for this material, but we're going to talk about this, and this is what I do want you to know. (Teacher Interview, October 21, 2013)

For Ms. Winston, Ms. Golde, and Ms. Wakeman, the issue of meeting their students' needs appeared to be more straightforward because they were specialists and were working with their students on very specific and targeted skills. However, they too faced complexities in meeting all of their students' needs.

Collaboration is necessary for continuity of instruction

Ms. White and Ms. Nelson often spoke of their frustration regarding the lack of collaboration with Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, and the lack of continuity of instruction for their students who were pulled for various intervention services, including special education. Ms. White and Ms. Nelson both expressed that there was a necessity for regular conversations to exist between themselves and Ms. Wakeman. Throughout the school year, they requested meetings with Ms. Wakeman that never happened other than an occasional conversation that took place in the hallway. Ms.

White referred to these hallway conversations as "fly-by conferences," and Ms. Nelson referred to them as "drive-by conversations" (Teacher Interviews and Fieldnotes). Both teachers expressed their frustration with the situation throughout the year, and they had both started the year with expectations that there would be collaboration with Ms. Wakeman. The 2013-2014 school year was the first year Ms. White had students receiving special education services in her room. She said,

> I thought there would be more continuity and collaboration…I just don't see what they are doing in there flowing over into the classroom…[they] leave for half of my math class, which is very worrisome to me because they get through the lesson and then they go to [Ms. Wakeman], but then how does she know what I taught in here to follow up? (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013)

In this example, Ms. White was talking about two students who were in her classroom for the math lesson and then went to Ms. Wakeman's room for the remainder of math. Ms. Nelson also articulated her frustration when she tried repeatedly to talk to Ms. Wakeman regarding students' instruction and needs, and could not get her to talk to her (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2014). After approaching instruction from a variety of ways, Ms. Nelson was still unsure on how to reach a student regarding her writing. She wanted to talk to Ms. Wakeman about what she was doing and what was working.

I return to the example in which Ms. White expressed her concerns and frustrations as a teacher having special education students in her classroom for the first time in order to provide further insight into the teachers' perspectives regarding this issue. During the meeting Ms. White said, "there was a disconnect between what [was] being taught in the different contexts…that the schedule has done a disservice to the

kids…and the kids need continuity" (Fieldnotes, March 21, 2014). Another fourth grade teacher then said that in the past, "a special education person would come to our planning to know what was going on." Dr. Williams did not address Ms. White's concern other than to say the schedule was "jam-packed." Ms. Nelson shared Ms. White's concerns and a few days later said to me that they (the administrators) "were not ready for this conversation" (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2014). At the end of the year, I asked Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams about their views regarding collaboration between special education and general education teachers, and Dr. Williams replied, "I think our hope is that it will happen naturally and informally" (Administrator Interview, May 28, 2014). This exchange of conversations implies that the administrators, who were generally supportive of their teachers, did not share Ms. White's and Ms. Nelson's level of concern about this issue, and without their support, it was going to be difficult to implement a time for collaboration (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999).

From the viewpoint of a teacher and as a future administrator, Ms. Nelson had given a lot of thought as to how to fit time for collaboration into the school schedule. She said,

> There would need to be…right after school or in the morning, at least 15 minutes, 20 minutes for us to sit down and talk specifically about the students that we share. I think it would need to be weekly…I don't think it would be realistic to…do more than that. Otherwise, we have drive-by conversations in the hallway, and I don't really know how effective those are for either one of us, truly. I think it should just be an expectation on the campus that sped teacher does this. (Teacher Interview, May 19, 2014)

Ms. Nelson recognized that all teachers are very busy and that both general education and special education teachers have responsibilities to collaborate, but she also acknowledged that without administrator direction, collaboration between general education and special education teachers would not happen. Her justification for creating an expectation that special education and general education teachers meet before or after school for twenty minutes was that this would be "best for kids."

Ms. Wakeman recognized the value of collaborating with general education when she said, "In the past, if I had my planning time the same as them, I would meet on their weekly meetings. This year that hadn't happened because I didn't get to have my planning time at the same time" (Teacher Interview, May 28, 2014). Even though she seemed to be saying that she would attend grade level planning meetings in the past, they had to coincide with her planning time. She did not explore the possibility of meeting outside of the school day. Also, Ms. Wakeman felt that she did have a level of understanding of what instruction was occurring in the fourth grade classrooms. All fourth grade lesson plans were accessible to her through Google Drive. She said, "I always know what they're doing because I go on the share drive…I get copies of what they do" (Teacher Interview, May 28, 2014). However, even though she had access to the fourth grade plans, they did not have access to her plans. She also thought that the hallway conversations were adequate when she said, "I know them all, we're all friends, and so I feel like I talk to them everyday about something" (Teacher Interview, May 28, 2014). These hallway conversations were not what Ms. Nelson and Ms. White wanted—

the deep conversations about the students they shared with Ms. Wakeman in order to provide instruction that had continuity between the classrooms.

Advocating for students

Research has shown that teachers' self-efficacy toward teaching students who struggle or who receive special education services influences their instructional choices and behavior (Bandura, 1993; Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Fuchs, 2009; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Ms. Nelson and Ms. White both appeared to feel that they were prepared and could provide instruction and an environment that was supportive of all of their students' needs. This was evident in the ways they advocated for their students by consistently providing and reflecting upon the effectiveness of the accommodations each student received, advocating for a change in a student's schedule if they felt it necessary, and advocating for special education students to participate in classroom projects.

Over the entire 2013-2014 school year I observed,both Ms. White and Ms. Nelson provide their students with their documented accommodations; however, they each did so in different ways. Ms. White would usually ask students if they needed or wanted their accommodations. For example, she would say, "Sam…if you need me to read the questions to you, please come back to my table. You have to read the passage to yourself" (Fieldnotes, October 23, 2013). The state accommodations allowed teachers to read students questions and answer choices; however, the students had to read the passage themselves if it was a reading assessment. Three students were afforded this accommodation, and Ms. White made the offer in front of everyone, but it did not appear to make the students uncomfortable because most times they would go back to her table. This example also shows that Ms. White wanted the students to make the decision to use

the accommodation or not. Ms. Nelson provided her students their accommodations by asking them to sit together. Then she would read the questions and answer choices to them, once they had all finished reading the passage (Fieldnotes, November 1, 2013).

Both teachers continually reflected on whether an accommodation was effective or not. They also explained to their students how their accommodations worked. Ms. White articulated this when she said, "I always make sure my kids know what they can ask, what they can and can't do…I always request that they are in the same group" (Teacher Interview, November 11, 2013). They did this because some of their students who received accommodations were pulled for small group testing, and sometimes the proctors did not have a full understanding of how the accommodations worked, and Ms. Nelson and Ms. White did not want their students to be confused or frustrated by this. In this way both teachers were not only advocating for their students, but they may have been trying to teach their students how to advocate for themselves.

There were occasions during the year when Ms. White and Ms. Nelson would bring up students in the progress-monitoring meetings or in preparation for an Admission, Review, and Dismissal meeting (ARD—an annual special education meeting to review a student's Individual Education Plan) in order to discuss a change to a student's schedule or to their accommodations. For example, Ms. White was particularly concerned about the two students who spent part of math in her classroom and the remainder with Ms. Wakeman. As Ms. Wakeman prepared for these students' ARDs, Ms. White expressed her concerns and the schedule was changed so that they would be in the classroom for the entire allotted time for math with some support, but this change would not be effective until fifth grade (Teacher Interview, May 21, 2014).

Ms. Nelson also advocated for her students by insuring they received the services she felt would be beneficial to them. In November 2013, Ms. Nelson had a new student

join her classroom. From Ms. Nelson's observations, she knew very little English and was having difficulty communicating with Ms. Nelson and her classmates, and in order to get attention she was making noises and disrupting those around her. Ms. Nelson was struggling to meet this student's needs, so she met with the English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator. The results of this meeting were that the student received pullout services for thirty minutes a day, and an electronic dictionary was ordered (Fieldnotes, November 15, 2013). As the year went on, the student made friends, was working and participating in the classroom, and was no longer disrupting those around her.

Another way that Ms. White and Ms. Nelson advocated for their students who were pulled from their classroom for instruction was to include them in as many activities as possible. Inclusion ranged from simple every day acts to arranging for a student to participate in a classroom project. Whenever the class was doing something together—pictures, going to the library, recess, specials, etc., Ms. Nelson and Ms. White always made sure that everyone was present and that the entire class went together. If students were in the classroom during times they were normally pulled out, Ms. Nelson and Ms. White made sure they were included in the activities the class had been doing. When a big project was coming up, they tried to coordinate so those students who were pulled had an opportunity to participate. Ms. White and Ms. Nelson always initiated the coordination effort; however, they were not always successful. One example of this was a weeklong event in March 2014 called "Surf Write Along." During this week, students participated in a daily pep rally and then spent the remainder of the day writing and conferencing with teachers and peers. An underwater sea was created out of the fourth grade hall and each classroom was transformed into a beach respite (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Ms. White's Classroom During Surf Write Along

Ms. White and Ms. Nelson wanted their students whom they shared with Ms. Wakeman to participate in "Surf Write Along," but Ms. Wakeman said she had things she wanted to work with them on. Ms. Wakeman also did not participate in the decorating of her room, so it looked as it always did. Those students who worked with Ms. Wakeman only participated in "Surf Write Along" by attending the morning pep rally where the entire fourth grade sang songs about writing and revising. Then they went to Ms. Wakeman's classroom for the times regularly scheduled and spent the rest of their day in their general education classroom. When the students came back to the general education classroom, they did not bring work with them and usually spent that time doing very little (Fieldnotes, March 25, 2014). These students did not have the opportunity to participate in this activity fully, and unintentionally they were positioned as outsiders when they returned to their classroom because they did not know what was going on and they had

no work to do. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White advocated for all of their students to participate in this event, but were unsuccessful. The lack of continuity and collaboration of instruction often led to the unintentional consequence of positioning students as struggling and learning disabled. By advocating strongly and consistently throughout the year for their students, Ms. White and Ms. Nelson attempted to position all of their students as capable.

LOOKING ACROSS THE ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

The findings based on the administrator and teacher data established that (a) the administrators' beliefs strongly influence the structures and intervention process put in place in schools, (b) administrators' and teachers' beliefs about instruction shifted based on the labels they ascribed to students (c) the lack of collaboration between general education teachers and the specialists contributed to the social identification of students, and (d) the language teachers and administrators used influenced students' learning.

Research has shown that administrators strongly influence the implementation of policy and instruction in inclusion classrooms (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). My findings support these previous studies by demonstrating the influence Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy had on the implementation of the progress monitoring committee at Brushwood Elementary. In addition, the findings of this study extend this body of research by showing that the administrators' approaches and beliefs were taken up by the teachers. For example, both Ms. White and Ms. Nelson, the classroom teachers portrayed students in multiple dimensions and did not come to the meetings wanting to automatically test for special education services. This supported the administrators' goal of moving past a "let's test mentality." Further, my study extends research about administrator influence by showing Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams' reliance on Ms. Golde

greatly influenced how students were identified and then instructed. Dyslexia was often discussed as a possibility when students were struggling with reading. Brushwood had a larger percentage of students identified as dyslexic than other elementary schools in Stoney Pond ISD. These findings show the significant influence of one person on a school process when the administrators support that individual's perceptions. My findings also extend the research regarding RtI (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009) by articulating how Brushwood implemented the process and the impact it had on the identification of students.

In addition to the administrators' influence on the implementation of RtI, my study supports previous research that found administrators also influenced instruction (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). My study builds upon this research by showing that the administrators' beliefs about instruction were not consistent: they shifted according to the label a student carried. Both Ms. Malloy and Ms. William articulated their belief in differentiation; however, this belief shifted in relationship to the instruction of students identified as *dyslexic* or *learning disabled*. Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, articulated beliefs also showed the shifting of instruction based on labels. Other research has shown that teachers approach instruction based on what they believe the students need (Dudley-Marling, 2004; Triplett, 2007). My study furthers this research by providing evidence that teachers' beliefs about instruction shift based on student's labels.

The findings presented in this dissertation also provide insight into the influence of administrators on collaborative teaching, and it supports previous research that demonstrated that collaborative teaching was difficult without a mutual planning time (Fennick, 2001). Triplett (2007) found that the general education teachers in her study did not have the self-efficacy to instruct struggling students, and the labels, such as low

socioeconomic class and race, influenced their expectations of those students. My study portrayed a counter story that was important to recognize. Ms. White and Ms. Nelson felt capable of teaching all of their students and were the catalysts in collaborating with Ms. Wakeman so that the learning disabled students had the opportunity to participate in some classroom projects. Ms. White and Ms. Nelson wanted to collaborate with Ms. Wakeman; however a coordinated, continuous instructional plan was never created for the students they shared. The administrators felt that collaboration would happen naturally. These findings demonstrate that without leadership, collaboration may not happen. A significant amount of the research focused on collaborative teaching focuses on the teachers, and the issues surrounding implementation. My study adds to this body of research by showing the influence that fractured instruction has on the social identification of students, as well as on their learning.

The language used in local contexts has significant influence on the social identification of students (Wortham, 2004, 2006). The use of the terms *dyslexia* and *smart* were two examples from my study that support Wortham's theory that learning and social identification are intertwined. The teachers' and administrators' persistent use of these terms influenced student learning and instruction. The prevalent use of the term *smart* also extends Wortham's theory by showing the influence of the term on the school culture, as well as in the classroom and on student social identification. My findings regarding the use of the word *smart* also aligns with Hatt's (2012) study about smartness. She states, "…smartness is located within us, not as a biological capacity, but instead, as a cultural practice we use to invest meaning in others and ourselves" (p. 457). The teachers, administrators, and students at Brushwood also used and were influenced by the term *dyslexia*. Ms. Golde's daily explanation to her students that the decoding mistakes they made were because they were dyslexic supports Fairbanks and Broughton's (2002)

findings found that students "learn to negotiate their academic and social subject positions" (p. 393) within their classroom walls. The use of the terms *dyslexia* and *smart* further cemented the students' social identification, and provided them little space to renegotiate or restory their positions in their classrooms (Maloch, 2005; Worthy, et al., 2012).

I established that the intervention process, administrators' and teachers' shifting beliefs, the lack of collaboration, and the ways language was used all contributed to the social identification of students. The students of Brushwood went about their day within the context of this school, and each classroom. In Chapter 5, I present three focal student case studies that examine how these students were socially identified, their contributions to their social identification, and how their peers contributed to their social identification.

Chapter 5: Focal Student Case Studies

In this chapter the analysis of three focal students' participation, embedded in the general education classroom and a specialist's classroom (the special education, dyslexia, or interventionist classroom) is presented. Examining each of the students' participation in different classroom contexts provides insight into how the context, as well as the teachers' contributed to the students' social identification. Further, the cases presented here provide an understanding of how the individual students and their peers contributed to their social identification. Lastly, these cases demonstrate how socio-historical categories are contextualized in a classroom, and how they are then used to identify students and how they are intertwined with a student's learning (Wortham, 2004, 2006).

THE CASE OF ZOE

My first impression of Zoe, a fourth grade student in Ms. Nelson's classroom, was that she was warm, funny, and full of energy (Fieldnotes, September 10, 2013). Ms. Nelson's first impression of Zoe was similar to mine: she described Zoe as "spunky and sweet…a very happy kid…popular and well-liked" (Teacher Interview, May 23, 2014). Zoe had attended Brushwood Elementary since kindergarten, had lived in the neighborhood that surrounded the school her entire life, and came from a close family. Her family was very active in their church, and Zoe and her two brothers were very busy with extracurricular activities, specifically gymnastics (Teacher Interview, May 23, 2014). Zoe's mother had been a gymnast when she was younger, and her children shared her passion for the sport. Zoe and her brothers were talented gymnasts, and practiced and participated in gymnastic meets regularly. In addition to gymnastics, Zoe was an avid football fan, and she loved going to the movies (Student Interview, February 13, 2014).

Academically, Zoe struggled to complete her work and to keep up with the curriculum in all subject areas. As the school year progressed, Ms. Nelson became increasingly concerned about Zoe getting further and further behind. Zoe worked very hard in class, but it took her a while to get started, and she worked at a slower pace than her peers (Fieldnotes/Teacher Interview, May 23, 2014). When describing Zoe Ms. Nelson said, "It seemed as though she was working so hard, but making very little progress: constantly having to take things home to finish, forgetting that she needed to finish work at home" (Teacher Interview, May 23, 2014).

Zoe began the school year having been identified with dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). In order to meet Zoe's academic needs she was pulled from her classroom for specialized instruction for dyslexia and for math intervention support. Table 10 outlines the instructional schedule Zoe followed most of the school year.

Table 10: Zoe's Pull-Out Schedule

Zoe's Schedule	
Tuesday	8:00 – 8:30 Math 1:45 – 2:30 Ms. Golde (Dyslexia Specialist)
Wednesday	7:45 – 8:30 Ms. Golde (Dyslexia Specialist)
Thursday	1:45 – 2:30 Ms. Golde (Dyslexia Specialist)
Friday	7:50 – 8:30 Math

Zoe received pull-out math instruction based on her performance on the state-mandated math test. Due to her schedule, Zoe missed science/social studies instruction in her classroom twice a week. Ms. Nelson's concerns regarding Zoe's lack of progress, specifically in math, continued, and eventually Zoe was tested for special education services. At the end of April 2014 Zoe was identified with a specific learning disability in basic reading and written expression, as well as ADHD. However, she did not qualify in the category of math, which was her teacher's original concern.

During the school year, Zoe exhibited anxiety at home by having episodes where she could not breathe. She openly initiated conversations with me about this situation and asked if I had ever experienced anything similar. Her four-year-old cousin, diagnosed with cancer, was not doing well, and this weighed heavily on her mind. Her anxiety was affecting her performance in gymnastics, and her father was encouraging her to stop gymnastics because her "breathing was more important than gymnastics" (Student Interview, February 13, 2014). However, Zoe did not experience any breathing difficulties at school; she just appeared to be worried and tired. By the end of the school year, Zoe's cousin was home and doing better in his battle with cancer. For the last month of the school year, she appeared to be less anxious, looked more rested, and she told me that she was feeling better because her cousin's health was improving.

Case selection: Zoe

Zoe was initially selected as a focal student because she was instructed in different classroom contexts as a result of her dyslexia identification, and later in the year she qualified for special education testing. Zoe's case is an example of determination,

optimism, and of a student taking responsibility for and trying to make sense of and apply what she was learning in one context to other contexts (Johnston, Allington, & Afflerbach, 1985; Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, & Smith, 2011). It also demonstrates how Zoe flexibly tried to influence her learning environment to meet her needs. In addition, it demonstrates the importance of social interaction for student learning, and that even when a teacher positions a student as capable, there are other influences that highlight that student's struggles. Last, it raises questions about the continuity of instruction that students identified as requiring specialized instruction receive, and about the influence labels have on student construction of identity.

Zoe in the classroom

Zoe was well-liked and popular with her classmates. Often Zoe would arrive at school right when the starting bell was ringing with a smile on her face, but looking pale and tired. The other students in the classroom always greeted her warmly. As she hung up her backpack, she would talk with her friends about what was happening in their lives and would share her own stories with them. These social interactions with her peers seemed to be very important to Zoe, as she expressed true interest in and compassion for her friends (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014).

She often had trouble getting right to work and had to be reminded to put her things away because she wanted to catch up with her friends. Once she was at her desk, she would get her work out and begin working. However, there were many times she would just sit quietly looking at her work. Sometimes, she would get up and ask Ms.

Nelson for help, and other times Ms. Nelson would ask Zoe if she had any questions (Fieldnotes, September 2013- May 2014).

As discussed in Chapter Four, Ms. Nelson's classroom was structured around the concept of community. Because Zoe was a very social individual, this type of classroom structure was beneficial to her learning.

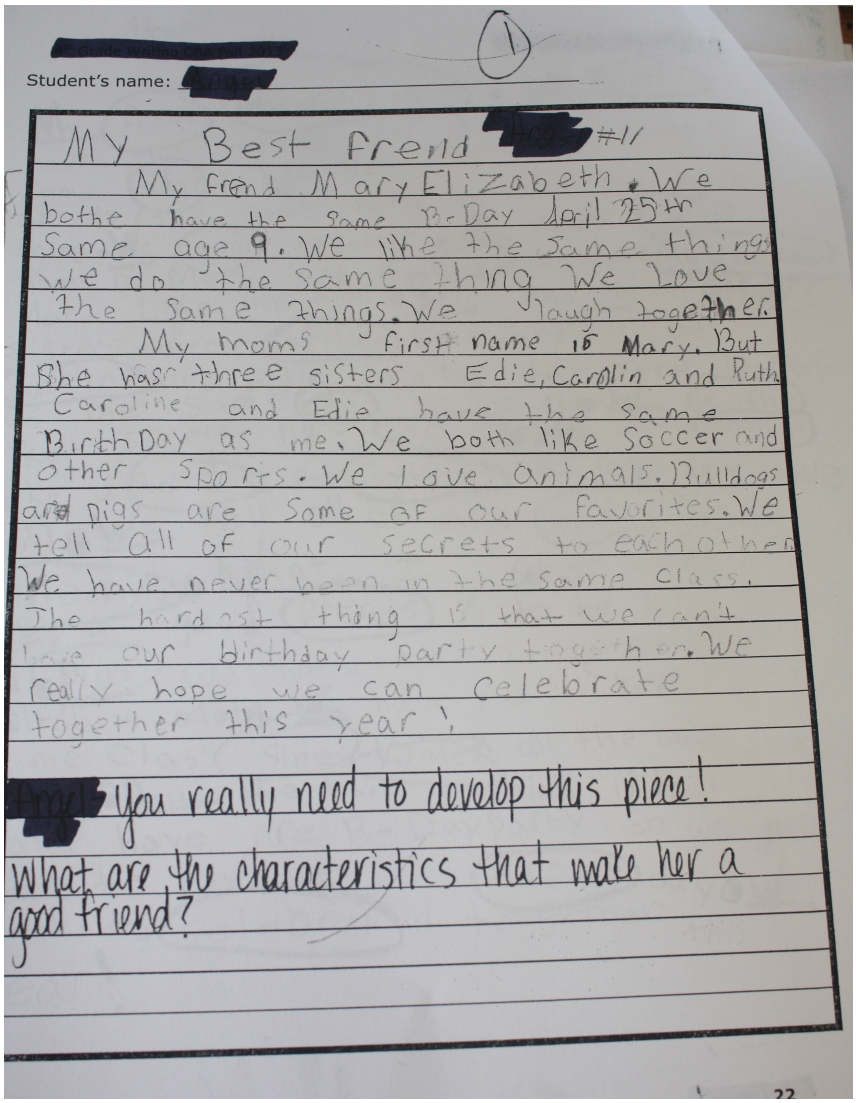
Taking responsibility: "I've been learning"

Zoe was a student who took responsibility for her learning and self identified as a student with dyslexia; however, she was never observed as using dyslexia as an excuse for her any of her academic struggles. Dweck (2000) described students who "remained focused on achieving mastery in spite of their present difficulties" (p. 6) as mastery-oriented. Zoe's goal was to improve in her writing, reading, and math. When asked to talk about her writing at the end of fourth grade compared to the beginning she replied, "I look back at my writing and it was not that great, but then I looked at the writing that I've done now, and I've seen that I've changed a lot" (Student Interview, May 17, 2014). This statement focuses on Zoe's perception of her improvement in writing over the school year. In regards to her reading, Zoe said at the end of the year, "I feel pretty good about reading because I've been learning…I've done a lot of reading. A lot of times, I think that the reading's helping me read better" (Student Interview, May 17, 2014). Both of these statements show that Zoe had realistic and objective conceptions of her reading and writing. She realized that she had more to learn in order to improve her literacy and that by practicing she would get better.

It was also important to Zoe that her teachers, family, and peers saw her as someone that kept trying, which she mentioned in both interviews. When asked how her peers saw her as a reader and writer Zoe replied, "I think they see me trying my best because they know that I have dyslexia" (Student Interview, May 17, 2014). In this statement Zoe was acknowledging that her peers knew she had dyslexia and that they recognized her effort, which seemed to be important to her. Ms. Nelson described Zoe as having "very good self esteem, her confidence and personality are strong assets, [and] I noticed the gap between where students were in the curriculum and where [Zoe] was seemed to widen. It seemed as though she was working hard, but making very little progress" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Zoe, May 29, 2014). In spite of all her struggles, Zoe demonstrated her determination and her effort to learn to Ms. Nelson.

The following example of Zoe's determination and desire to improve occurred during a writing conference. A district curriculum-based assessment asked all fourth graders to write an expository essay addressing the following prompt: "Write about someone in your life who has the characteristics of a friend. Explain what makes this person a good friend" (Stoney Pond ISD District Assessment, January 2014). Prior to the writing conference, Ms. Nelson had read Zoe's essay and had graded it. In preparation for the conference, Zoe was to have read over her writing and come with ideas for improvement and/or questions. The first question Ms. Nelson had for Zoe was, "Have you had a chance to read what you wrote?" Zoe had not read it, so Ms. Nelson gave Zoe some sticky notes to write down what she was thinking as Ms. Nelson read it aloud (see Figure 16 for Zoe's Expository Essay).

Figure 16: Zoe's Expository Essay for January 2014 District Assessment



Student's name: [redacted]

1

My Best Freind [redacted] #11

My Frend Mary Elizabeth. We bothe have the Same B-Day April 25th Same age 9. We like the Same things we do the Same thing We Love the Same things. We laugh together. My moms first name is Mary. But She has three sisters Edie, Carolin and Ruth Caroline and Edie have the Same Birth Day as me. We both like Soccer and other Sports. We Love animals. Bulldogs and pigs are Some of our favorites. We tell all of our secrets to each other We have never been in the same class. The hardest thing is that we can't have our birthday party together. We really hope we can celebrate together this year!

[redacted] You really need to develop this piece! What are the characteristics that make her a good friend?

22

After she read Zoe's essay aloud, Ms. Nelson asked Zoe if she had any comments and Zoe told Ms. Nelson that she should have expanded on her first sentence and provided more explanation of who Mary Elizabeth was. Ms. Nelson talked to Zoe about the type of writing this prompt was asking her to do and that her opening statement would let the reader know what the whole essay would be about. Zoe knew that she was expected to

write an expository essay, but it seemed to Ms. Nelson that Zoe was unclear about exactly what that meant. As part of the writing process, students were expected to plan their essay using a structure that they had been taught to use. The writing plan was comprised of three parts: (a) brainstorming; (b) the body of the essay—where the student would list the points they were going to make; and (c) a conclusion. Approximately ten minutes into the conference Ms. Nelson and Zoe had this exchange related to her writing plan.

Ms. Nelson: Let's look at your system…is this planning system working for you?

Zoe: Umm…It's just that I don't really know how to do it, but I still try.

Ms. Nelson: Boy that is really…

Zoe: I just try and copy off my binder (*this is where Zoe keeps all of her writing*).

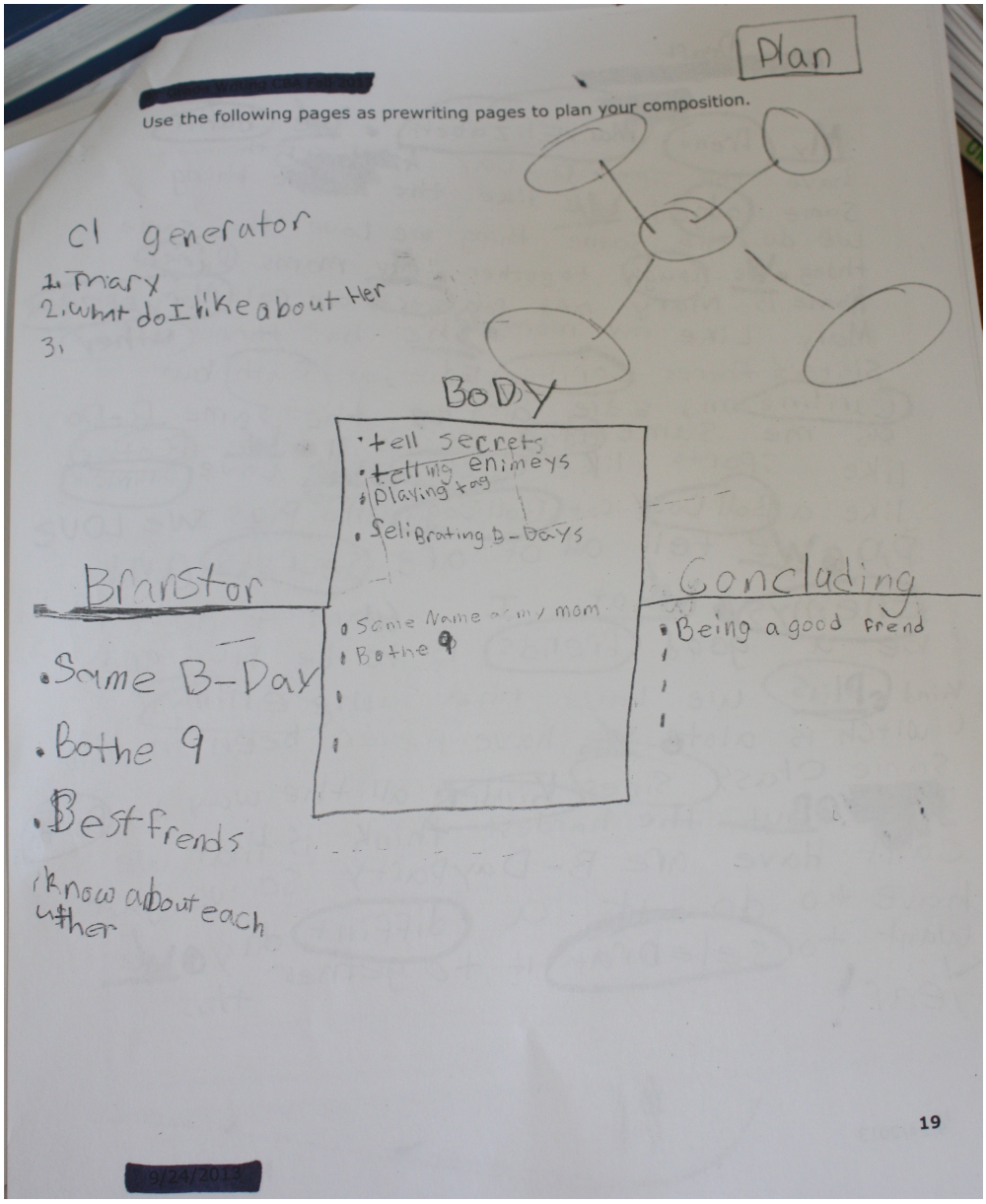
Ms. Nelson: That is powerful…you know why that is powerful? (*Zoe shakes her head no*.) Because you are beating your head against the wall trying to do this and you don't know how…how silly is that? Can I help you with that? Do you know what the purpose of this is? (*Pointing to her writing plan*.) (See Figure 17).

Zoe: A little bit. (*She tries to explain, but she does not have a clear understanding*)

Ms. Nelson: If it isn't clear, is it worth it?

Then Ms. Nelson shares her own process of making lists as part of her writing plan. They discuss using bubbles and eventually they come up with a way for Zoe to plan her writing—to do what makes sense for her. Zoe then says, "I like the idea of making a list" (Writing Conference Audio, February 10, 2014).

Figure 17: Zoe's Expository Essay Writing Plan

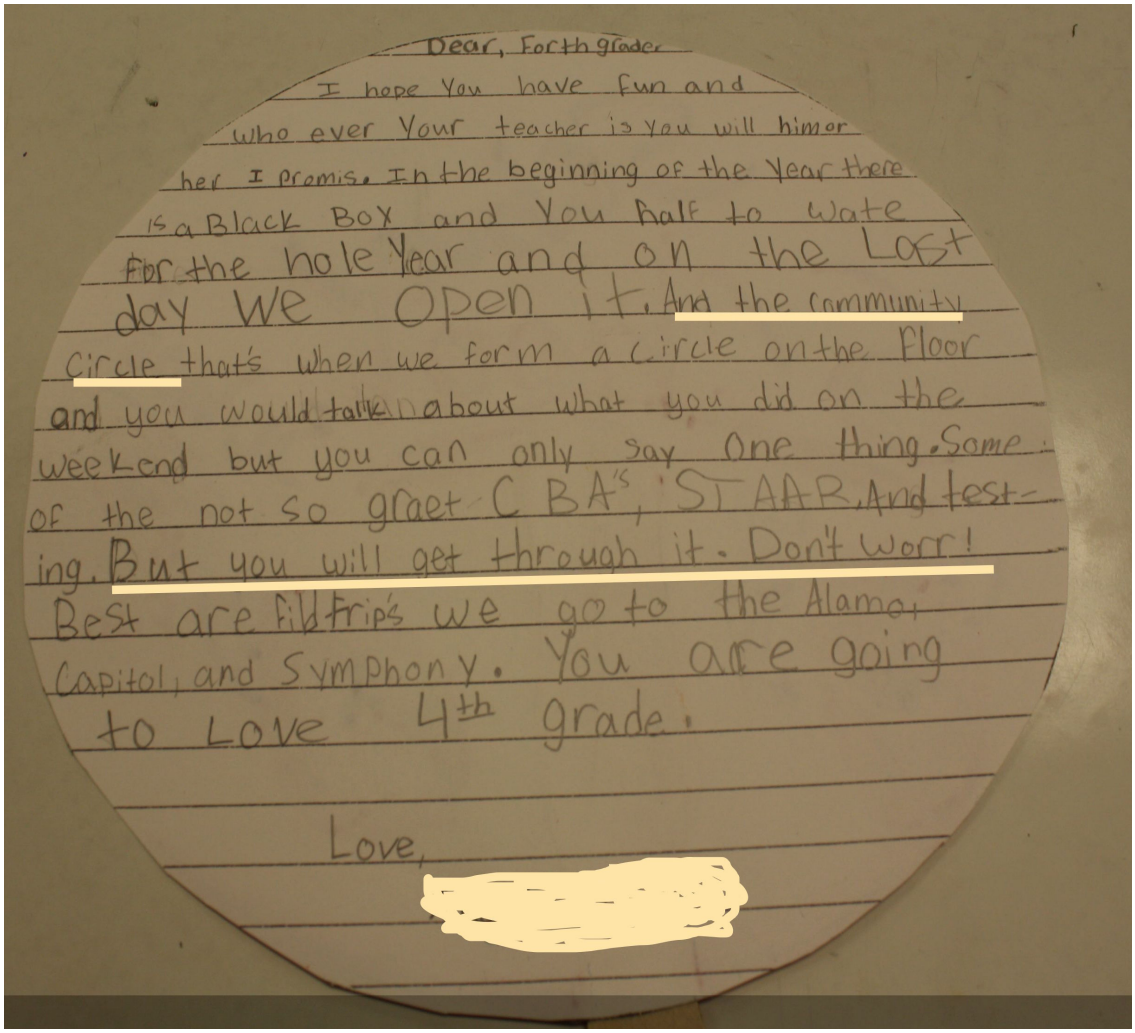


This exchange is just one example of Zoe's determination to learn; she did not give up or make excuses. The conference presented here took place in February, well into the school

year, after months of trying to understand the genre of expository writing. Zoe took responsibility for what she did not know by saying forthrightly to Ms. Nelson that she did not know how to use the planning system she was taught. Also, she wanted Ms. Nelson to know that she tried and that she used her resources (her binder) to help her. During this conference Ms. Nelson supported her and provided space for Zoe to ask questions and to present her ideas. This type of interaction is representative of the general approach Ms. Nelson took with all of her students and of Zoe consistently trying and asking questions so that she could meet her goals for improvement.

Another example of Zoe's hopeful outlook and determination to keep trying is from a letter she wrote to the next year's (2014-2015) fourth graders (See Figure 18).

Figure 18: Zoe's Letter to Next Year's Fourth Graders



From this letter we get to know a little more about Zoe and what she enjoys and what causes her anxiety. The experiences Zoe most valued during fourth grade were those where she had the opportunity to interact socially with her peers: the opening of the Black Box, community circle, and field trips. She also honestly shared with the future fourth grader those things that were "not so great"—tests. During our last interview, after STAAR was completed, Zoe said that she "felt nervous" about the test, but she "knew

[she] could do it" (Student Interview, May 17, 2014). At the time of this interview, Zoe did not know her results for STAAR. As it turns out, she did not meet the standard for reading, math, or writing. Based on my observations of her and my conversations with her, I believe that she would be disappointed; however, I think that she would then say that she just had to keep trying and practicing, as she counsels a future fourth grader regarding tests: "You will get through it. Don't worri" (see Figure 17). Even when sharing those things that were "not great" about fourth grade, Zoe kept a hopeful and positive outlook, all indicating that trying and learning, and interacting with her friends, were most important.

Visibility of struggle

There were consistent moments where Zoe's struggles were visible in the classroom. These occasions happened during the course of the day and in her written work. Zoe, her peers, and Ms. Nelson seemed to approach these "problems/ challenges/errors…to be expected if a person is taking on challenge – which is valued" (Johnston, 2012, p. 17). Viewing learning from a dynamic-learning frame (Johnston) matched Zoe's overall attitude toward all her endeavors. As discussed above, Zoe appeared to be driven to keep improving and believed she would attain improvement through practice. Since social interaction was something Zoe enjoyed, she often initiated conversations with her friends about the books she was reading with the audio reading app (*Learning Ally*) Ms. Golde had provided her (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). There were times when she felt lost during these discussions. Even though Zoe wanted to talk about books with her classmates, her knowledge of those books was often

limited because she had only read a portion of the book, or she had seen the movie. The following exchange provides insight into how Zoe felt during some of the conversations she had with her peers. We (she and I) were discussing what she was currently reading on *Learning Ally*.

Researcher: What book are you currently reading on your reading app?

Zoe: *The Hunger Games*.

Researcher: How far are you into it?

Zoe: I think I stopped it, so I think I'm like on page … they go fast, but they don't go fast. I think I'm on 20-something, or 30, or 40-something. Somewhere in the 20's, or the 10's, someplace.

Researcher: Are you enjoying it?

Zoe: Yeah, but, it's hard to catch up, because everybody else in my class knows the book. I'm like, 'Who are those people?' I have only seen the movies. 'Oh, wait, what are they saying?' (Student Interview, February 14, 2014)

Based on this example and from my observations it, seemed Zoe recognized that her peers were reading more than her and that often she could only relate to their conversations about books based on her knowledge of the movie. She mentioned, "It's hard to catch up," which indicates that she felt behind—that her classmates kept reading and she did not know all of the books her peers did.

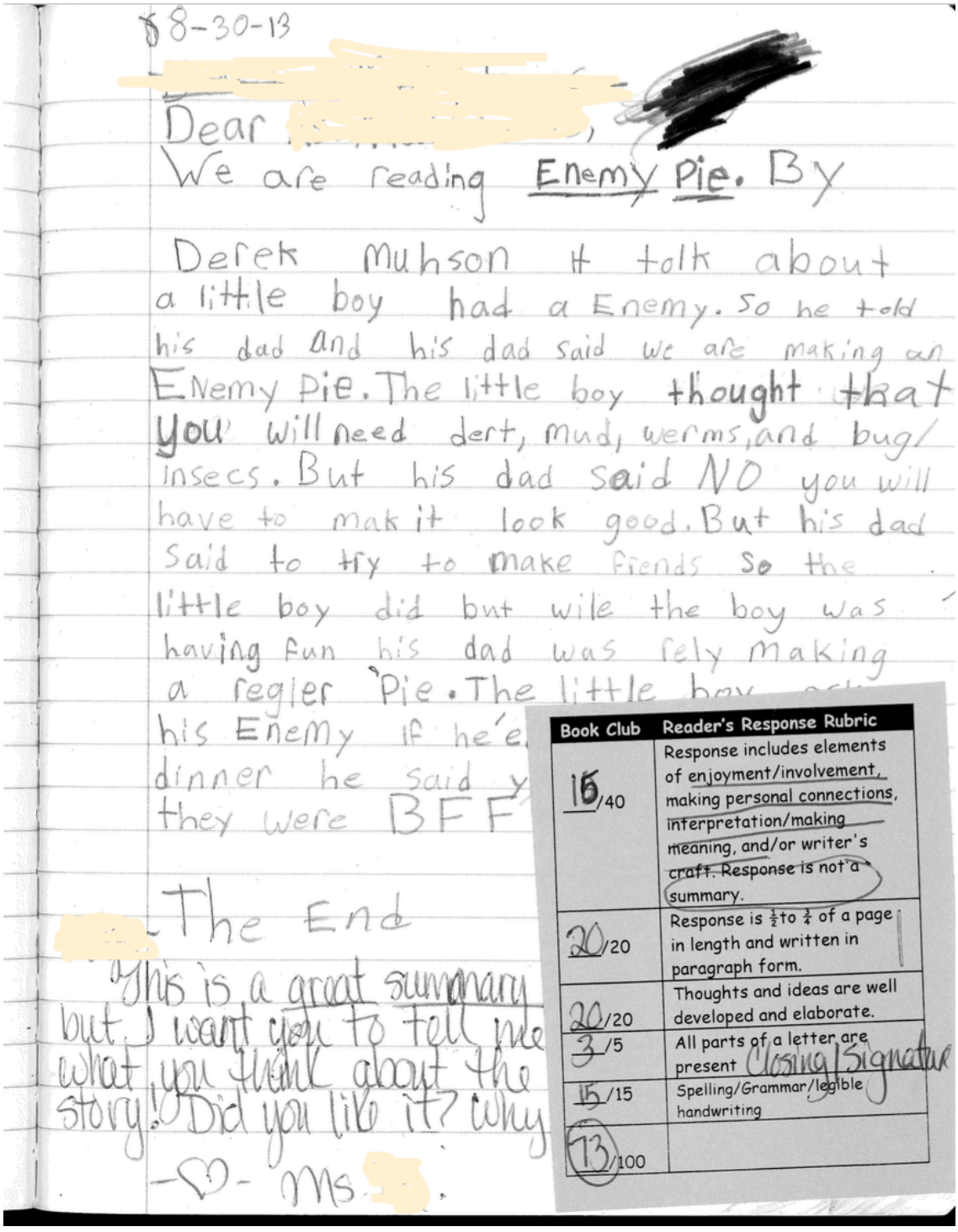
Zoe, as previously mentioned, recognized that her peers knew she was dyslexic; however, from the following example, you can see that she would apologize for "her problem" and found comfort in knowing that others had struggles too. For example, when talking about how her closest friend saw her as a reader and writer, Zoe said,

> I think she (Zoe's friend) understands what my problem is, because sometimes she might catch me, and say that that word is wrong. I'm like, 'Oh, oh, I'm sorry.' Then she's like, 'Oh it's all right, I have trouble doing that stuff too.' She's also in Miss [interventionist] class, which is down there in the portables…I go to class to do math, but she goes to do reading. (Student Interview, February 14, 2014)

Zoe was talking about how a friend saw her as a reader and writer. The first thing Zoe did when her friend told her that a "word is wrong" was to apologize. Once her friend replied that it was "all right" and that she had "trouble doing that stuff too," and Zoe remembered that her friend worked with the interventionist too, it seemed that she felt better. Zoe's friend seemed to recognize that others have "trouble" learning certain things and she shared that with Zoe.

Another example of Zoe's struggle was visible in her responses to the books Ms. Nelson read aloud to the class. Each fourth grade student had a reading response journal where they were sometimes expected to write a response, in the form of a letter, to a book that the teacher had read aloud. Ms. Nelson had a rubric that she used to grade some of the student responses. Figure 19 and 20 are Zoe's responses to the books read aloud on August 30, 2013 and October 10, 2013 respectively.

Figure 19: Zoe's Reading Response on August 30, 2013


8-30-13

Dear [redacted],

We are reading Enemy Pie. By Derek Muhson it tolk about a little boy had a Enemy. So he told his dad and his dad said we are making an ENemy Pie. The little boy thought that you will need dert, mud, werms, and bug/ insecs. But his dad said NO you will have to mak it look good. But his dad said to try to make fiends so the little boy did but wile the boy was having fun his dad was rely making a regler Pie. The little boy [illegible] his Enemy if he'e[illegible] dinner he said y[illegible] they were BFF

The End

This is a great summary but I want you to tell me what you think about the story! Did you like it? Why

-♡- Ms. [redacted]

Book Club	Reader's Response Rubric
16/40	Response includes elements of enjoyment/involvement, making personal connections, interpretation/making meaning, and/or writer's craft. Response is not a summary.
20/20	Response is ½ to ¾ of a page in length and written in paragraph form.
20/20	Thoughts and ideas are well developed and elaborate.
3/5	All parts of a letter are present Closing/Signature
15/15	Spelling/Grammar/legible handwriting
73/100	

As can be seen in this example, Zoe's response to *Enemy Pie*, by Derek Munson, was a summary and did not include a personal response. Ms. Nelson wrote Zoe a note asking her to tell her what she thought about the story and if she liked it, and took points off for not including a signature.

Figure 20: Zoe's Reading Response on October 10, 2013

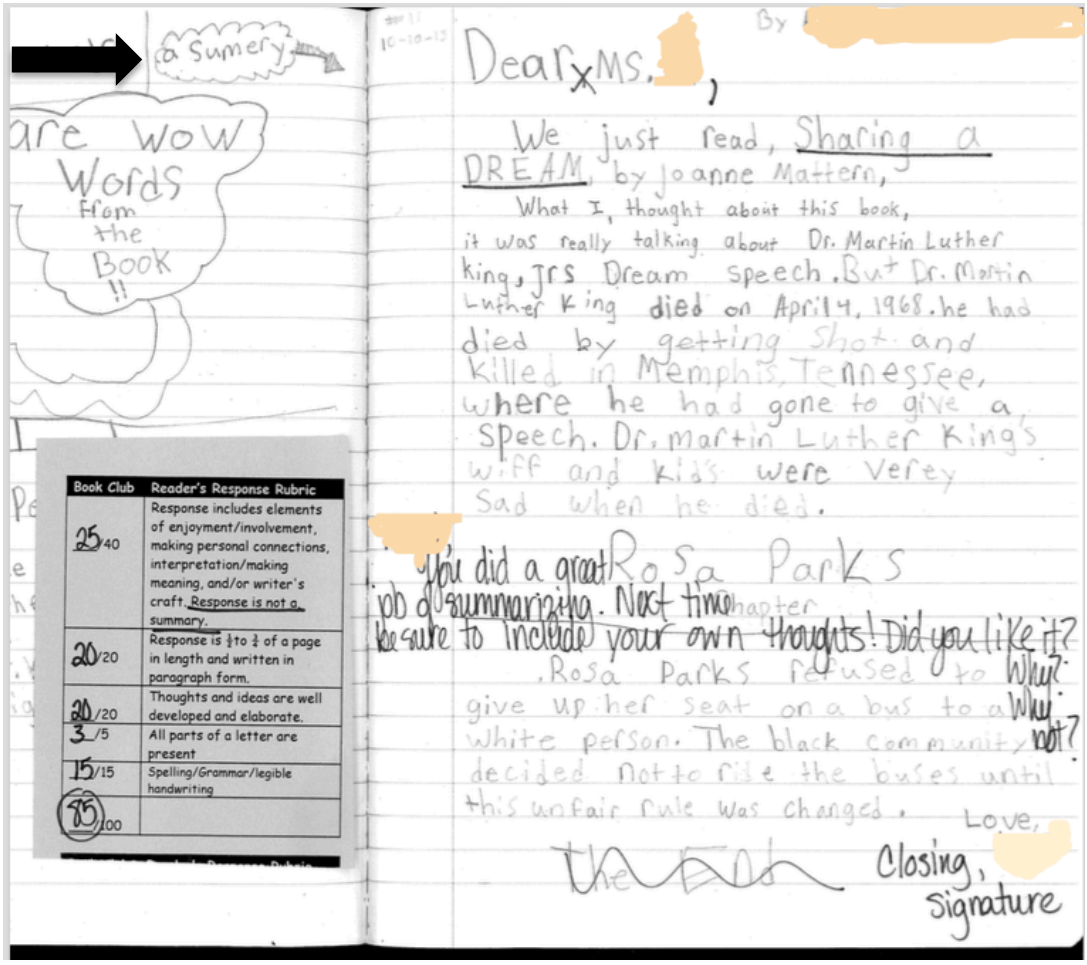


Figure 20 provides an example that demonstrates that Zoe was still writing summaries for her reading responses in October. Ms. Nelson again asked Zoe to include her own

thoughts in her response and again took off points for the missing signature, however this time she writes "Love, [Zoe]" providing Zoe a model of her expectations. Upon close inspection of Figure 20, Zoe wrote "a sumery" with an arrow pointing to the next page where she wrote her response. This seems to indicate that it was still her understanding that a reading response was to be a summary, even though Ms. Nelson wrote her a note about her expectations. Ms. Nelson had also explained the rubric at the beginning of the year to the class and reminded the students of how they should respond right after she read aloud (Fieldnotes, October 10, 2014). Zoe's written responses to the books read aloud in her class seem to demonstrate that she was still struggling to articulate her comprehension of stories from a personal connection.

Zoe's visibility of struggle appeared to grow as the year went on. As Ms. Nelson said, "It seemed as though she was working hard, but making very little progress" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Zoe, May 29, 2014). Throughout the school year, Zoe would struggle through the morning math problems. She would avoid working on her math problems by walking around the room until redirected or sitting at her desk, staring at her paper (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - April 2014). Often, Ms. Nelson would have to work with her, or explain the problem to Zoe. Zoe's frustration seemed to come to a critical point in the middle of April 2014, right before she qualified for special education services. During this time, the fourth graders were participating in 200 Club, which was an opportunity for students to complete math problems and win small prizes every morning. 200 Club was used as a review, and the prizes were an extrinsic reward for completing the problems correctly and for showing the work and thinking behind the solution. Every morning those students who had shown their work and/or who had gotten all of the problems correct were publicly rewarded. On April 15, 2014, I was observing in Ms. White's room when Ms. Nelson came in to talk to me and was visibly upset. She reminded me that Zoe

had gotten all the problems correct for 200 Club the previous two days, but had shown very little work. Ms. Nelson went on to say,

> I thought something was wrong because two of the problems were very difficult. I asked [Zoe] to explain her thinking about the problems, but she could not. I then realized that she might be copying off someone else's work. When I asked her about this she got upset—she cried—and it took her a long time before she admitted that she had copied off of [another student]. (Fieldnotes, April 15, 2014)

Copying another's work was a new coping mechanism for Zoe. She was now trying to mitigate her difficulty with the work by copying someone else's work. This example could be interpreted as an indication that Zoe was ashamed of her performance in math, and she wanted to be seen as capable by her peers. Due to the public recognition of math accomplishments during the weeks of 200 Club, Zoe might have been feeling extra pressure. At this point Zoe appeared to be "shamed" by her math performance (Turner & Schallert, 2001), which led to her initial reaction to copy a friend's answers in her quest to be seen as capable. Turner and Schallert discuss that the graduate students in their study could recover from an initial shame reaction and be more resilient if they were "highly extrinsically motivated, had high certainty regarding their sense of academic competence, and perceived that a good course grade was instrumental to future academic goals" (p. 327). In Zoe's case it seemed that it was important to her to be recognized by her classmates, and therefore she was highly extrinsically motivated.

Ms. Nelson did not want Zoe to feel bad, nor to see copying other's work as a solution. So, she told Zoe that they would work together on the problems because she knew that it was beneficial to Zoe's learning when she could talk through her thinking with another. That day Zoe got all of the problems right while working with Ms. Nelson and she could explain her thinking, and the next morning she was publicly recognized by

her classmates for getting all the math problems in 200 Club correct. These examples show that Ms. Nelson continued to set up Zoe for success and contributed to the social identification of Zoe as a capable student.

Zoe in the dyslexia classroom

As previously discussed, the instruction in Ms. Golde's classroom was very structured and centered on teaching students identified with dyslexia to decode words. Every day, students were reminded of the spelling/decoding rules Ms. Golde had taught them because Ms. Golde believed this was the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia. There was a pattern of response expected by Ms. Golde, and the instruction was fast-paced, with no space for discussion. Often, this environment was difficult for Zoe because there was little to no social interaction other than answering Ms. Golde's questions. As the following examples show, Zoe tried to make sense of what she was learning and shape her learning environment.

Why don't they know this?

Fairbanks and Broughton (2003) found that students learn to negotiate their academic and social subject positions based on context. Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) found that there was an incongruence of goals and strategies presented to students between their general education classroom and a remedial classroom. They concluded that, without clear goals and collaboration around these goals and the strategies taught, the students would not develop clear understandings. In addition, Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, and Smith (2011) found that aligning reading intervention instruction and the instruction in the general education benefited second grade struggling

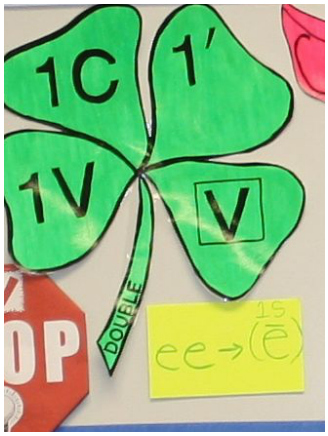
readers growth in reading. Zoe, in this example, seems to be grappling with how to use what she was learning in Ms. Golde's classroom in other contexts. When I asked Zoe about the spelling and decoding rules she was learning in Ms. Golde's (the dyslexia specialist) classroom and if they helped her with her reading and writing in Ms. Nelson's room or at home she responded,

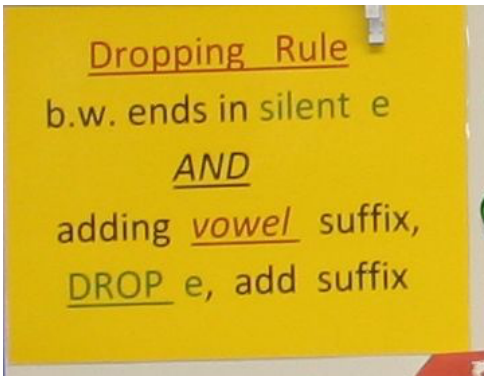
> Sometimes. Not really, because I don't know what the other people know. I feel like they don't know the rules, and the things that we use, like the vowel, or consonant. I feel like they don't know that. I get back to class and I'm like, 'Oh, you don't know that?' I'm like, 'That's what I hear all the time in Ms. Golde's class.' (Student Interview, February 14, 2014)

In this example, Zoe seemed to be trying to make sense of what she was learning in Ms. Golde's class compared to what her friends knew. She was surprised to learn that what was important in Ms. Golde's class was not known to students in her regular class, and that this knowledge was not valued outside of Ms. Golde's class. Zoe also seemed to know the rules, but did not understand how to apply them in other contexts. There are several factors that may have contributed to this situation.

One reason is that even though Ms. Golde provided students with the ability to listen to books, she never provided time for them actually to do so in her classroom or to discuss what they were reading (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). Also, the fast pace of Ms. Golde's classroom and the focus on one rule at a time most of the time seemed to narrow students' ability to apply rules fluexibly to reading situations, as well as across contexts. There were times when Ms. Golde would ask students to work on words that required the flexible application of two rules. In this example Ms. Golde asks the students to, "Look at the top of your page. What will you be doing? Drop or double it. You have to use your clover or your yellow rule" (see Figure 21) (Fieldnotes, February 18, 2014).

Figure 21: Clover and Yellow Rule





As the students worked in their workbooks, Ms. Golde walked around the room helping students and repeating the rules when necessary because many students, including Zoe, had difficulty determining which rule, the clover or the yellow (dropping) rule to use with the words in their workbook. After the students had completed the workbook page, Ms. Golde said, "You have to be able to go back and forth between these rules. You cannot just rely on one rule…We might have to do that again. We had some trouble with that, and it should not have been so hard" (Fieldnotes, February 18, 2014). She then went on and reviewed the rules for the students. This example shows that the students, including Zoe, had difficulty with the flexible application of two rules in isolated practice. It also demonstrated why Zoe struggled with applying them in other contexts and why Zoe continued to attempt to make sense of what she was learning.

Sense-making

As in Ms. Nelson's classroom, in certain circumstances Zoe would ask questions to further her understandings in Ms. Golde's classroom. Given the structure of Ms. Golde's classroom and teaching, there was not as much room for questioning, but Zoe would ask when she was unsure about something, demonstrating her desire to make sense of what she was learning. In the following brief example, Zoe asked Ms. Golde a question about the words they were learning. Ms. Golde had the students working on a page in their workbook that had a list of words spelled phonetically (the following example provides what the student read, as well as the phonetic spelling that was in the student's workbook). The students had to read the word and then write the word with the correct spelling.

S1:	Bank	[baŋk]
S2:	Tinker	[tiŋ′kər]
S3:	Pee	[pē]
Zoe:	Is it pee, p – e – e, or pea, p – e – a ?	
Ms. Golde:	Look at your vowels, guys. I warned you. This is really tough. (Fieldnotes, February 4, 2014)	

The phonetic spelling for both pee and pea is \pē\ and Ms. Golde never answered Zoe's question. Zoe was truly interested in understanding and waited for several seconds for an answer, the entire time looking directly at Ms. Golde. Once Zoe realized her question would not be answered, she went back to work. In this example, Zoe was trying to expand her understandings and acted in a manner that was welcomed and supported in

her general education classroom. She was also using her knowledge of homophones, a topic that had been discussed in her classroom, in order to further her understandings in Ms. Golde's classroom. The significance of Zoe "acting silly" in Ms. Golde's classroom was that this is the only context she was disruptive.

Another example of Zoe's attempt to make sense of the learning environment in Ms. Golde's classroom came in the form of disruptions. Zoe said she liked Ms. Golde, and enjoyed coming to her class (Student Interview, February 13, 2014). However, it appeared that the lack of social interaction did not work well for Zoe, and she would often disrupt class by making faces at her friends and playing with her shoelaces. One afternoon I had just arrived in Ms. Golde's classroom, and she was giving the students words to spell one at a time. The student would write the word, add a suffix (i.e. "ing," "ness"), and then shared with the group. Every once in a while Ms. Golde would stop the student and remind the group of the rules they were working on. While this was happening, Zoe was making faces and acting silly and disrupting everyone. Ms. Golde then told Zoe "she had to work hard if she wanted to get [a reward from the] treasure box" (Fieldnotes, February 18, 2014). Zoe did stop that day, but had to be reminded often on other days. Previous examples have shown that Zoe wanted her peers to see her as capable, so this may have been a reason she stopped.

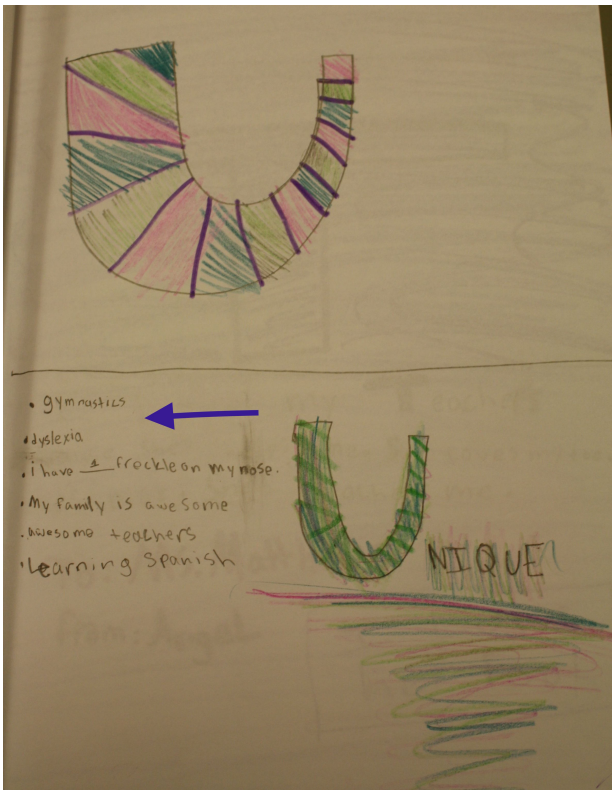
Ms. Golde's focus on teaching students with dyslexia how to decode words, her fast-paced teaching, and her expectations for rote responses contributed to the social identification of her students as students with dyslexia. Also, as shown in Chapter 4, Ms. Golde continually reminded her students that the mistakes they made were because they

were dyslexic. The examples in this chapter, as well as those in Chapter 4, demonstrate that the category of dyslexia was intertwined with Zoe's learning (Wortham, 2004).

Zoe: A Portrait

Zoe had to navigate the social, instructional, and teacher expectations as she moved between Ms. Golde's and Ms. Nelson's classrooms. Also, her schedule required her learning to happen in chunks of time with very little continuity. However, in both settings, her fourth grade classroom and Ms. Golde's classroom, Zoe was a hard worker. She was an individual who tried, who practiced, who liked social interaction, and who expected to improve. At the end of the year, each fourth grade student created a Z to A Book, each letter representing something about the student or about his or her fourth grade experiences. Figure 22 is Zoe's "U" page – What Makes You Unique.

Figure 22: U From Zoe's Z to A Book



Zoe wrote on this page, "gymnastics, dyslexia, I have one freckle on my nose, my family is awesome, awesome teachers, learning Spanish" (Zoe's Z to A Book). My interpretation of this artifact, and my conversations with and observations of Zoe, is that being a gymnast and being dyslexic are important aspects of Zoe's identity. During our final interview, when asked to describe herself, the first words she said were "gymnast and dyslexic" (Student Interview, May 17, 2014). In addition to these two attributes, Zoe exhibited determination, agency, and an understanding that a label (dyslexic) did not fully define who she was. There were many factors that contributed to Zoe's determination: her experiences at school, her family support, her emotions, and her social interactions with her peers, as well as her success as a gymnast. Her ability to stay optimistic and not give up seemed a result of the interconnectedness of these factors. All of her teachers saw this as an attribute that would help her through her learning difficulties.

Zoe also took responsibility for her learning and tried to navigate the differing expectations of Ms. Nelson's and Ms. Golde's classrooms. Ms. Nelson's classroom was supportive, a learning environment that was social and interactive. As a student who learned best through social interaction, Zoe attempted on several occasions to make the scripted, structured instruction in Ms. Golde's classroom more interactive. Sometimes her attempts could be viewed as off-task or disruptive, and at other times, she asked valid questions in order to extend her understandings. When Zoe was disruptive she was asked to focus, and when she asked questions they were often ignored. Even though Zoe tried to

reconcile why she was learning decoding rules—and why other students in her fourth-grade classroom did not know them—she kept a positive view that what she was learning in Ms. Golde's classroom was valuable.

Even though Zoe carried the label of dyslexia, she strove for her peers to know her for the individual she was. She wanted her teachers and peers to know that she tried, that she could do things on her own, and that even though she at times struggled, she was capable.

THE CASE OF BOB

My first impression of Bob, a fourth grade student in Ms. Nelson's classroom, was that he was shy and caring (Fieldnotes, September 10, 2013). Ms. Nelson described him similarly when she said he was normally "a sweet, docile, and compassionate child" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014). However, Ms. Nelson went on to say that he was "a very emotional child and I fear that this could cause some social problems for him the older he gets" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014). Bob lived with his mom and dad and his twin brother in the neighborhood that surrounded Brushwood Elementary. During third grade, Bob's mom was "battling cancer," but she was doing well at the time of my study (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014). In addition to his twin brother, Bob had two older brothers who lived on their own. Bob enjoyed playing baseball and playing with his niece and nephew (Student Interview, March 20, 2014). In addition, Ms. Nelson said that Bob was "always doing some kind of athletic activity at recess" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014). Bob's caring was reflected when he provided assistance to a friend who spent several months in a wheel chair after major leg surgery (Fieldnotes, November 2013 - February 2014). Ms. Nelson also observed their relationship when she said, "The friendship that blossomed between the two boys this year was truly heartwarming" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014).

Bob and his twin brother came to Brushwood Elementary during the second semester of third grade and were placed in the same general education classroom. Bob had not been identified for interventions or special education services at his previous school. Near the end of third grade Bob (and his twin brother) were tested for special education and qualified as having a specific learning disability in reading fluency,

reading comprehension, written expression, math problem solving, and math calculation (Personal Communication, November, 4, 2013).

Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, provided most of Bob's content instruction (reading, writing, and math) in her classroom. Bob was only in Ms. Nelson's classroom for instruction during the intervention time in the morning (8:00 - 8:30) and for science and social studies (see Table 11).

Table 11: Bob's Pull-Out Schedule

Bob's Schedule		
Monday – Friday	8:00 – 8:30	Intervention (Ms. Nelson's w/support)
	8:30 – 9:30	LA - Ms. Wakeman (Resource)
	9:35 – 10:25	Specials
	10:25 – 11:00	LA - Ms. Wakeman (Resource
	11:15 – 11:45	Lunch
	12:00 – 1:10	Math - Ms. Wakeman (Resource)
	1:10 – 1:30	Recess
	1:35 – 2:30	Science/SS - Ms. Nelson
	2:30 – 2:45	Read Aloud/Dismissal - Ms. Nelson

At the beginning of the school year, Bob had support in the classroom at the beginning of the day. After his annual ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal Meeting) in the middle of April 2014, he was provided support in the classroom during science and social studies.

Case Selection: Bob

Bob was selected as a focal student because he received special education services and was instructed in both the general education and special education classrooms. His

case is an example of a student who "showed a clear helpless pattern in response to difficulty" (Dweck, 2000, p. 17). It also demonstrated the importance of goals. Dweck (2000) found that students who focused on learning were less likely to fall into patterns of helplessness in the face of difficulty than students who focused on their performance. Bob presents a complicated case that demonstrates the importance that audience has on the social identification of students, how students construct their identity, and the goals they seem to set for themselves based on the task. Last, Bob also tried to make sense of what he was learning, as did Zoe, and was also concerned about the learning of others.

Bob in the classroom

Bob was well liked by his classmates and would talk to them about what was going on in his life (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). In the mornings, Bob would come into Ms. Nelson's classroom and follow the same routine as his classmates. After he made his lunch selection and hung up his backpack, he would go directly to his desk and begin working. Every morning Ms. Nelson would write on the board the work the students should do from the time they got settled in the morning until 8:30 when the intervention time was over. Math warm-up problems were usually the first thing on the list, and Bob was responsible for these problems. Often, he struggled with these problems and would just sit at his desk staring at the paper until he put it away and then would take out his Daily Language Review (a packet of grammar practice put together by Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher). Bob rarely asked Ms. Nelson for help, but there were times she came over and helped him with the math problems. A teaching assistant was supposed to be in Ms. Nelson's classroom from 8:00 to 8:30 A.M. in order to work with Bob; however, this support was not consistent. Without support personnel in his classroom, I often observed Bob just sitting at his desk, not engaged in any activity.

Visibility of struggle: Avoiding the difficult

Since Bob was only in Ms. Nelson's classroom from 8:00 to 8:30 A.M. during the designated intervention time each morning, there were limited opportunities to observe his interactions with his peers and with the classroom curriculum. Also, due to the difficulty Brushwood Elementary had in finding a permanent special education teaching assistant, Bob often did not have support in the classroom at the beginning of the school day. As previously stated, I often observed Bob just sitting at his desk, not working, or reading a book from his book bag when a teaching assistant was not in the classroom. Also, Ms. Nelson could not provide Bob with one-on-one instruction during this entire time because she had to meet the needs of all the students in the classroom by providing Tier 1 intervention supports (interventions provided in the classroom). Ms. Nelson also noticed Bob's tendency to shut down when she said, "He appeared to lack confidence in his ability to do difficult tasks. He completely shuts down and refuses to even try without me or an aide there with him to walk him through it" (Ms. Nelson's Portrait of Bob, May 29, 2014).

When the teaching assistant was in the classroom during the 8:00 to 8:30 A.M timeframe, she would help Bob with his math problems or his Daily Language Review (a packet of practice activities for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.), or they would go out into the hallway and read and discuss a book Bob was reading (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). Even though Bob told me that he read at home to his parents it did not seem to be a consistent practice based on his interactions with the teaching assistant. A classroom project that Bob was responsible to complete each nine weeks was a book project (he had his choice of book and could select from several presentation options that varied each nine weeks). One morning the teaching assistant came into the room to work with Bob and asked him if he had read the night before, to

which he replied, “No.” She then told him he “had to read at night in order to do the book project and if you don’t you won’t complete your project” (Fieldnotes, November 6, 2013). Based on my observations, it seemed to me that reading was something Bob found difficult and avoided, and he did not appear to be motivated to read in order to complete his book project. The only times I observed him reading were when the teaching assistant was in the room and she read with him (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). At the end of the year when I asked Bob what he had improved on, he replied, “math and writing.” When I specifically asked him if he improved in reading he said, “No. I’m kind of not into reading.” And when I asked him why he did not think he had improved, he said, “I don’t really know” (Student Interview, May 23, 2014). In this example, it seems that Bob was saying that because he was “not into” reading, he did not improve. This view is then complicated by his next statement, which could be interpreted that he had “lost faith” (Dweck, 2000, p. 7) in his ability to read. Ms. Nelson’s classroom had many students who I observed enjoyed reading and chose to read whenever an opportunity was presented. Often during this early morning time when Bob was in the classroom, students would read once they finished their morning work. Seeing many of his peers and friends seemingly finding reading easy may have added to Bob’s avoidance or reluctance to engage with a book. Dweck found that students who had a helpless response to a task would often blame their intelligence for their failure. Bob does not say overtly that he is not a good reader, but he seems to be implying this in his response.

At the end of the year, a teaching assistant was consistently in Ms. Nelson’s room in the mornings. She seemed to be aware of Bob’s tendencies to avoid difficult tasks, so she would give him choices on how she could help him. In this following example, Bob was supposed to be finishing his Famous Texan Report about Nolan Ryan. He looked kind of down on this day, just looking at his report and not getting started. The teaching

assistant told him, “You have made a lot of progress. You are almost done.” Bob just looked at her and the teaching assistant took his paper and started writing on it. She then stopped herself and said,

> Oh, I don’t want to put pencil to paper. We can do this one of two ways. You can tell me what you want to say and I will write it for you OR you can write it on your own and then I can type it for you. That way it is your work. I can either help you to write or to type. What will be better for you?” (Fieldnotes, May 15, 2014)

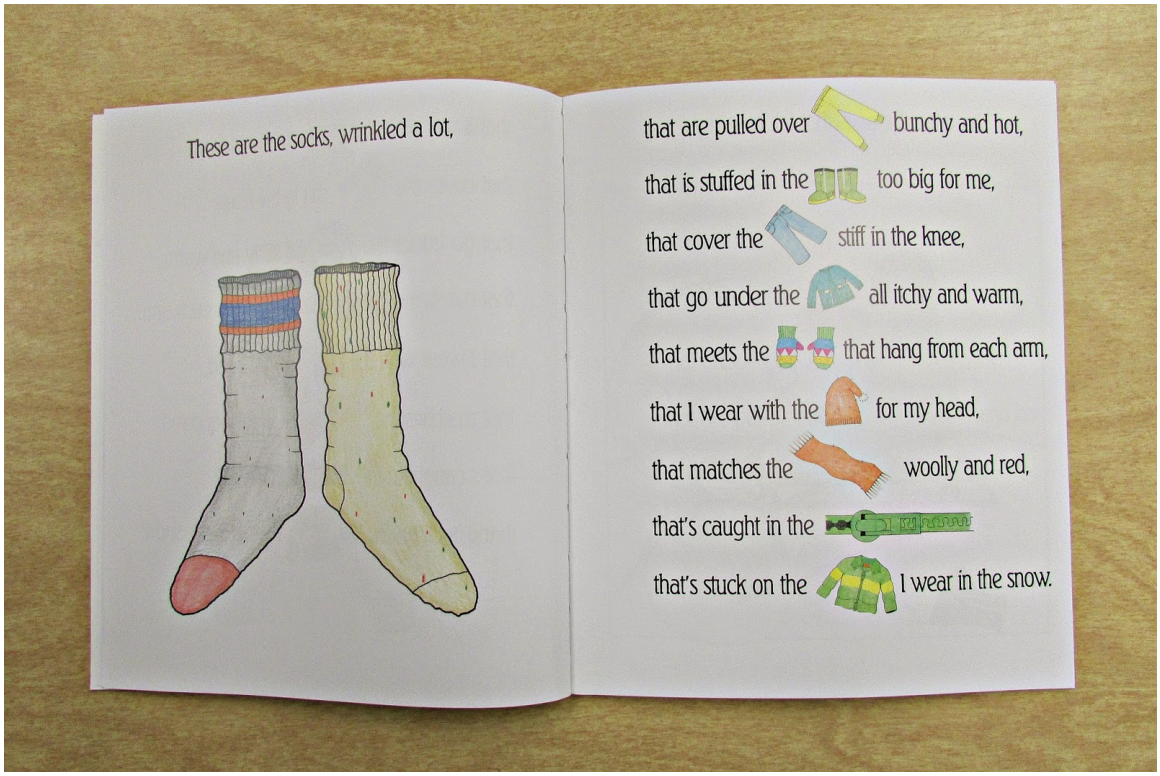
After a moment’s hesitation Bob chose to type the report. He then began to dictate his report to the teaching assistant. She had to stop him several times to remind him of the report requirements, and to prompt him to look over his notes. At the beginning of this example, Bob appeared to be avoiding the task altogether; however, when the teaching assistant gave him the choice to dictate or write, and then type or have her type, he was able to engage in the work. This example seems to indicate that when presented with a difficult task it was helpful for Bob to have a choice on how he would receive help.

Influence of audience

Wortham’s (2004, 2006) studies points to the importance teachers, peers, and the person play in social identification. Bob’s case extends this by demonstrating that there are other factors that contribute to an individual’s social identification. There were several times when Bob participated in classroom projects that required him to present to his peers. Even when the task seemed to be difficult, rather than avoid the task, Bob appeared to be motivated to perform well. He took it upon himself to take time to practice and to ask his teachers to work with him during lunch in order to create a product of which he was proud. This was a much different picture of Bob than what was regularly seen in the classroom when he was asked to do independent work.

At the beginning of December the fourth grade began preparing for Reading Restaurant, a time in which each fourth grader selected and practiced reading a picture book to read to students in kindergarten through third grade. The fourth graders had to write a summary of their book that would go into a menu, along with food items their guests could choose from. Reading Restaurant was one of the few classroom reading projects in which Bob participated. Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher, selected the book *The Jacket I Wear In the Snow* (1994) for Bob to read, and she also made the decision that he would read it with a partner (taking turns reading each page). For this project, Bob seemed motivated to practice his reading so that he could read well for his audience. I observed him practicing and looking over the book whenever he had a chance (Fieldnotes, December, 2013). The day of the Reading Restaurant, Bob enthusiastically helped to set up the room and was excited for the younger students to arrive (Fieldnotes, December 18, 2013). Once the first group of students arrived and were served their snacks, the readings began. Bob's partner was reluctant and had to be coaxed into reading; however, Bob was excited to read. Bob read each of his pages with confidence and sometimes added commentary. *The Jacket I Wear In the Snow* (1994) is a book that rhymes and each page adds on to what was written on the previous page. Bob read the last page (see Figure 23) smoothly and at the end of his reading said, "Wow, that was a lot!" (Audio Recording, December 18, 2013).

Figure 23: Page Bob Read from *The Jacket I Wear In the Snow* (1994)



In this example, Bob appeared to want to be seen as a reader not only by his peers, but also by the younger students. He appeared to be motivated by the audience. The activity, the audience, and his learning all seemed to be intertwined.

In the next example, Bob was again motivated by the prospect of an audience. At the end of the year, Bob participated in the fourth grade Famous Texan project. Each student was to research a famous Texan, write a report, and create a PowerPoint to be presented. For the presentation, students were to dress like their famous Texan, and students from other grades were going to come and see the performances. Bob again was partnered with the same boy he was for Reading Restaurant, and their famous Texan was Nolan Ryan. As the presentation day approached, and after Bob and his teaching assistant

had worked out that he would dictate his report to her, Bob took full responsibility for the project. He asked the teaching assistant if he could stay in at recess (and Bob seemed to enjoy recess) to finish dictating his report. She agreed to work with him and told Ms. Nelson that Bob was going to stay in during recess (Fieldnotes, May 15, 2014).

On May 19, 2014 I had the opportunity to video and observe some of the Famous Texan dress rehearsals in Ms. Nelson's room. One of the presentations I viewed was Bob and his partner's. Bob was dressed in his baseball uniform to represent Nolan Ryan, while his partner was dressed as he usually did for school. The purpose of the dress rehearsal was to provide the students a chance to practice for their peers, and to give them some feedback on how to improve their performance. When it was their turn, Bob and his partner went to the front of the room and Bob went through the entire PowerPoint. His partner stood to the side, and I observed him making silly faces at the audience. As Bob spoke he had his back to the audience so he could read what was written on the slides. When he was done he turned around and called on his peers for feedback. The two pieces of advice he received were to: (a) speak louder; and (b) to turn and face his audience. Bob listened attentively and appeared to be taking their suggestions seriously.

Audience seemed to be a factor that was highly motivating to Bob to approach his learning in a way that was different from how he usually was observed approaching it. In these examples he was willing to forgo recess in order to finish his report, he listened to his peers' feedback in order to make his presentation better, and he read in front of an audience with confidence.

Bob in the special education classroom

In Ms. Wakeman's classroom Bob was very talkative and playful with his twin brother. Ms. Wakeman had assigned seats at her teacher table, and another student

separated Bob and his brother in order to help them focus on their lessons. Bob told me that he liked both Ms. Nelson's and Ms. Wakeman's rooms, but he liked Ms. Wakeman's room more because they got "to go on the computers" (Student Interview, May 23, 2014). Similar to Zoe, Bob tried to make sense of what he was learning and being asked to do across contexts, and he also tried to make space for discussion or to make suggestions to Ms. Wakeman.

Making sense of what he was learning

Bob, like Zoe, tried to make sense of what he was learning or being asked to do across contexts. Some examples of this were asking how to do a problem he saw on a test, and questioning why a teacher was asking him to do something that did not make sense to him. For example, Stoney Pond ISD had all elementary students take a reading and math Universal Screening 3 times per year. According to Hughes and Dexter (n.d) universal screening is "the first step in identifying students who are at risk for learning difficulties (p. 1). The screening was a quick assessment of targeted skills, such as phonological awareness and computation. After Bob had taken the Universal Screening for math he came into Ms. Wakeman's room asking her, "How do you do 323/23? That was a problem on the Universal Screening." Ms. Wakeman then went through the problem with him. During the year, one of the math skills that Bob had learned was division and in our last interview told me, "I am doing good on my dividing" (Student Interview, May 23, 2014). From this example, it seems that Bob was interested in the topic of division and saw something on the Universal Screening that he did not understand. He then took responsibility for his learning by asking Ms. Wakeman how to solve the problem.

This next example was a conversation Bob and I had during our first formal interview. It shows that Bob was thinking critically about the tasks Ms. Wakeman asked him to do.

Researcher: Is there anything at school that makes you nervous?

Bob: The work.

Researcher: What about the work?

Bob: Sometimes we write stories about where you went this spring and all that stuff.

Researcher: What makes you nervous about that?

Bob: I, literally, never went anywhere on spring [break]. That's probably like a problem for anybody that hasn't gone anywhere. (Student Interview, March 20, 2014)

Bob did not initially respond to my question, as I expected him to. I thought he would say something about tests, which he did later in this conversation. However, what seemed to make him most nervous was when he was asked to do tasks that he had no connection to. In addition, he was not only concerned about himself, but he showed empathy for all students. By asking students to write about where they went over spring break, a teacher is making some assumptions that his/her students have similar experiences. Wortham (2004) states, "identity-driven interactional patterns can shape opportunities for students in classroom activities and that access to such activities can influence how much students learn" (p. 731). This example highlights that Ms. Wakeman was creating a classroom assignment based on her assumptions that all of her students had gone somewhere on spring break, and if they had not, as in the case of Bob, their learning through this activity

might be limited. Asking already struggling students to write about something of which they may not have any experiences to draw from could potentially further their perceptions of themselves as *not smart*.

Ms. Wakeman did not provide opportunities for students to discuss and expected students to respond to her questions with direct answers. Bob was the only student in her group that would ask questions, make comments, and make suggestions. In the following example Ms. Wakeman was teaching a lesson about synonyms and asked the students to read different lists of words that were synonyms for commonly used words. She wanted them to be aware of these words so that they could use them when they were revising their essays.

Ms. Wakeman: What I want you to know is that you are going to use these words during revising. These are words to make your writing more exciting. When you write your own essay you will have an assignment to use some of these words. Let's go to synonyms for great. Powerful

Bob: We used the word powerful in our story.

Ms. Wakeman: Great connection.

The group then got up and went to look at the large chart that their story, entitled "The Powerful," was written on. After looking at the story, they returned to their seats and Ms. Wakeman continued the lesson by asking for synonyms for "feel." Bob asked, "Do you mean how you feel or what you feel?" And Ms. Wakeman replied, "Most of the words would describe what you feel – like jabbed, lumpy" (Fieldnotes, November 13, 2013).

Like the previous example, the next example shows that Bob would make suggestions when he thought that something needed to be made clear. Ms. Wakeman was teaching a lesson on closed and v-e syllables. She did not explain or review the difference between a closed and v-e syllable. She said, "I'm going to give you an example of what I want you to do." Then she wrote "Val (closed); en (closed); tine (v-e)" on the board and said, "I want you to read the syllable and then label it." Bob then suggested, "Put example next to that, so people will know" (Fieldnotes, May 5, 2014).

All of these examples demonstrate that Bob was interested in making sense of his learning and that he was not only concerned about his learning, but also his peers. They also show that Bob was a very different student in Ms. Wakeman's room than he was most of the time in Ms. Nelson's. It appeared that he was more confident and secure in Ms. Wakeman's room.

Encouraging learning of others

There were many times in Ms. Wakeman's class that Bob would contribute to the conversation in order to encourage the learning of others. Sometimes his comments would be related to the lesson and other times his comments were related to how the group was interacting with the topic. For example, Ms. Wakeman was reviewing a lesson about the exceptions to reading "ive" with a long i: instead it is read with a short i. Then she had the students read words by putting syllable cards together. For example, o-live (olive), ex-pen-sive (expensive), etc. I observed that two students were taking their arms out of their sleeves and not really attending to the lesson. Ms. Wakeman quickly and quietly redirected them. The she continued with the students reading words. One of the

students said he could not do it. Bob then said, "I think you need to put a sign above the clock that says we cannot say 'I cannot'" (Fieldnotes, May 9, 2014). Ms. Wakeman replied, "Bob, that was a good idea" and proceeded with the lesson. Often, Ms. Wakeman told her students that they had to try and that they could not say, "I cannot" (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014), so Bob seemed to be reminding her of this. I also found it interesting that he thought that the sign should go above the clock. Ms. Wakeman taught in thirty minute increments: twenty-five minutes of instruction followed by a five minute break. I often observed the students looking at the clock or asking if it was time for a break. Bob may have been thinking that placing a sign by the clock would be effective since it was a place they looked often.

At other times Bob would try to get the group to participate more. The following example happened near the end of the year. For several days the students had been learning about closed and v-e syllables. Ms. Wakeman began the lesson by saying,

> We have been doing these super hard words with these syllables – closed or v-e. We are going to first do our syllables and then you are going to put them together. You are going to then scoop it (a technique from the Wilson Reading Program where students scoop under words with a pencil or eraser as they read so they read smooth and fluently). This is going to be fun. (Fieldnotes, May 5, 2014)

Ms. Wakeman then put down on the table three cards with syllables that made a word when put together. Students were expected to say each syllable, say what type of syllable it was, then scoop and put the syllables together, read the word, and then say what the word meant. An example of the type of words they were working with was con-tem-plate (contemplate). This was one of the few times that Ms. Wakeman did not have the students take turns; anyone that wanted to answer could speak. I noticed that Bob answered the most. Ms. Wakeman put down val-en-tine (valentine) and one of the

students responded. Then Ms. Wakeman put in-com-plete (incomplete) down on her table and then the following exchange occurred.

Ms. Wakeman: Hmmm, let's go.

Bob: In, closed, com, closed, plete, v-e, incomplete, not finished. Why am I the only one saying anything?

Ms. Wakeman: I don't know. I'm going to have to start calling on people. (Fieldnotes, May 5, 2014)

These examples show that Bob was not only concerned about his own learning, but that he also wanted to insure that his classmates were participating and learning too. Bob was contributing to his own social identification as a capable learner in these situations. This is significant because, as discussed in Chapter 4, Ms. Wakeman's room and her instruction were focused on skills she believed students with learning disabilities required. Ms. Wakeman did not provide very much room for students to talk, other than to directly respond as she expected during the teaching of a skill. By being the student who responded the most, it seemed that Bob wanted Ms. Wakeman to see him as capable.

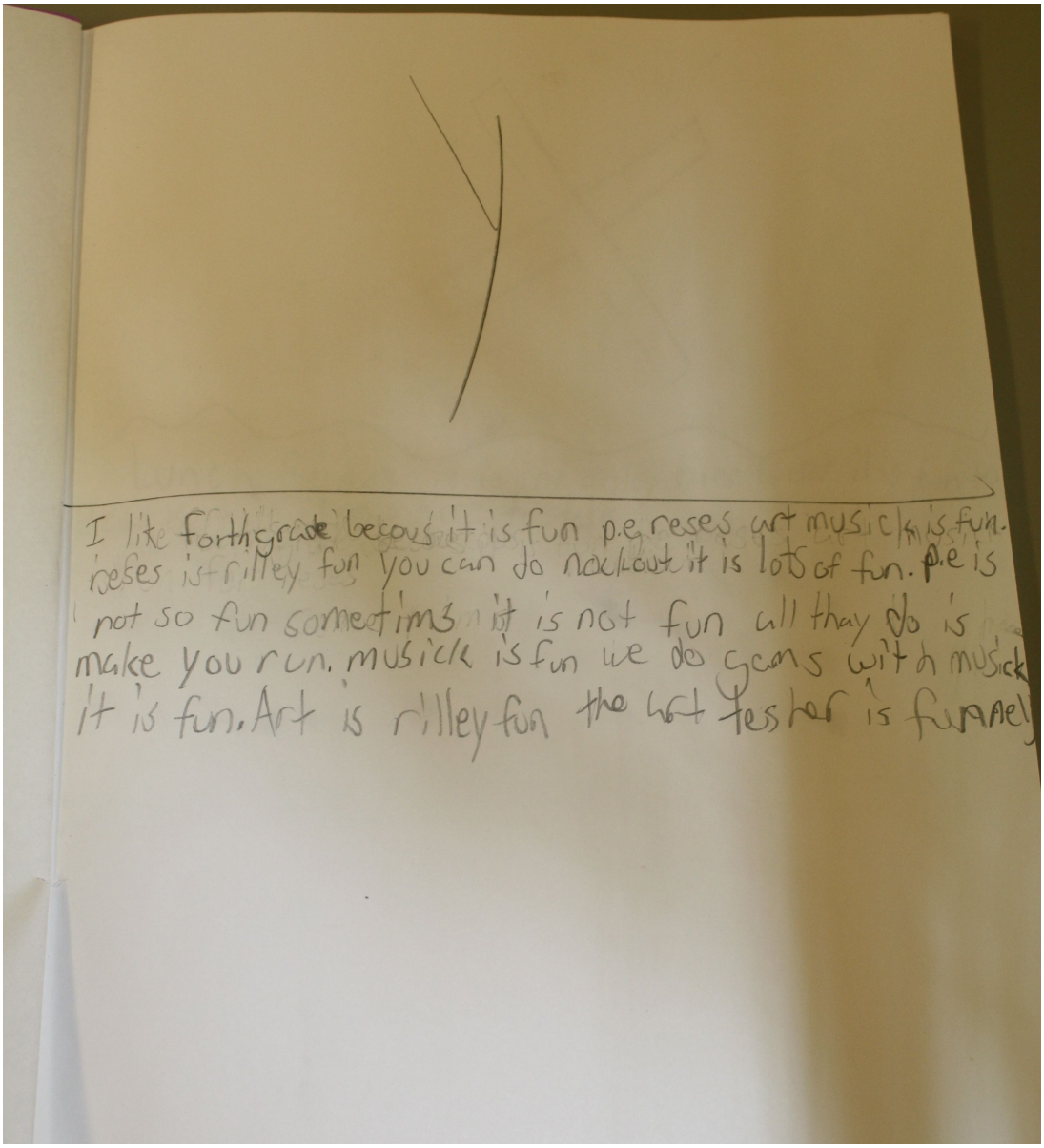
Bob: A Portrait

Bob had to navigate the social, instructional, and teacher expectations of both Ms. Nelson's and Ms. Wakeman's classrooms. It seemed that it was somewhat difficult for Bob to completely navigate the instructional expectations in Ms. Nelson's classroom. Some reasons for this could be that he spent little instructional time in her classroom, and the expectations in her classroom were very different than in Ms. Wakeman's. Ms. Nelson said, "I didn't get to have him for a lot of the day, so really I found myself more working with Bob on social stuff and independence. I don't feel like I was very successful

getting him to an independent place" (Teacher Interview, May 19, 2014). My observations support that Bob seemed to participate more than the other students in his group while in Ms. Wakeman's room, but often showed signs of helplessness in Ms. Nelson's classroom (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). However, there were times in Ms. Nelson's classroom, when motivated by an audience that Bob took ownership of his learning, such as during Reading Restaurant and the Famous Texas projects.

Like the rest of the fourth grade Bob created a Z to A book at the end of the year. Bob's "Y" page—Y I Like Fourth Grade, represents how Bob viewed fourth grade (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Y From Bob's Z to A Book



Bob writes,

> I like fourth grade because it is fun. P.E., recess, art, music is fun. Recess is really fun. You can do knock-out; it is lots of fun. P. E. is not so fun sometimes it is not fun, all they do is make you run. Music is fun. We do gems (?) with music. It is fun. Art is really fun. The teacher is funny.

My interpretation of this artifact, and my conversations with and observation of Bob, is that having fun was an important aspect of school and learning for him. In our final interview Bob described himself as "funny" and "does not like to read because it is too hard" (Student Interview, May 23, 2014). When Bob interacted with his classmates in Ms. Nelson's and Ms. Wakeman's classrooms for casual conversation, as well as on the playground, he seemed happy and was usually smiling (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). However, Bob mostly exhibited traits of helplessness (Dweck, 2000) when in Ms. Nelson's room, particularly when there was not a teaching assistant sitting beside him. However, it appeared that when he had an audience, as exemplified by the Reading Restaurant and Famous Texan projects, he enjoyed himself. During these projects Bob seemed to have set a "performance goal" (Dweck) for himself, so that he would appear capable to his peers and his audience of younger students. The setting of this goal seemed to have a positive influence on his learning in the sense that he remained engaged. In addition, Bob's case highlights a student who was concerned about the learning of others, as well as generally being a caring student.

THE CASE OF SAM

My first impression of Sam, a student in Ms. White's classroom, was that he was very shy and quiet, and had a hard time starting his work (Fieldnotes, September 17, 2013). I also observed that he was animated when talking to his friends about sports. Ms. White said that she thought he had a "great personality and [was] able to get along with others very well" (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014). Sam's family lived in the neighborhood that surrounded Brushwood and was very supportive, according to Ms. White. Sam came to Brushwood Elementary during third grade from another Stoney Pond ISD school. According to Ms. Winston, the reading interventionist, Sam's family requested that he be tested for dyslexia when he arrived at Brushwood. This was something they had wanted his previous campus to do, but had not been done. After he was tested at Brushwood, it was determined that he had dyslexia and he began to see Ms. Golde for instruction. Sam had an older brother who had attended Stoney Pond ISD schools and had had "very few struggles" (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014). Outside of school, Sam was a select soccer player who played on a team with boys that were a year older, and his team was undefeated (Fieldnotes, April 16, 2014). The difference in Sam's demeanor in class and on the playground, playing soccer with his friends, was something both Ms. White and I observed (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). On the playground, he appeared confident and seemed to take on a leadership role.

Academically, Sam's struggles in the classroom became more and more evident during the year. Ms. White said, "With every passing day I felt like [Sam] was falling farther and farther behind" and went on to say,

> Gaps got bigger and his frustration level was almost maxed out. There were days when [Sam] didn't have the stamina to complete a task or even ask questions. I

> found that he would complete assignments as fast as possible (often being the first one done). (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014)

Sam would often, according to Ms. White, rush through assignments just to say they were complete. She felt that he did not take time or put in much effort with his work because he just wanted it done. Johnston (2012) theorized that one of the attributes of individuals who view learning through a fixed-performance frame is their need to finish a task first in order to look and feel smart (p. 23), and this may have been a reason for Sam's behavior.

Ms. White consistently discussed Sam's academic struggles with the progress-monitoring committee, and therefore as the year progressed he received more of his instruction outside the general education classroom. Instruction focused on STAAR test taking strategies with the intervention teacher, Ms. Winston, was added to his schedule in February 2014. In addition to the pull-out interventions Sam received (see Table 12), Ms. White met with him before school started each day to tutor him in math. Sam's father struggled with providing consent for special education testing because he felt that Sam needed to work harder; however, Sam's parents signed the consent around February 2014 (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014).

Table 12: Sam's Pull-Out Schedule

Sam's Schedule	
Monday	8:00 STAAR Prep Strategies (Ms. Winston- Began end of January 2014)
	2:10 Math
Tuesday	8:00 Math
	1:25 STAAR Prep Strategies (Ms. Winston- Began end of January 2014)
	1:55 Ms. Golde (Dyslexia Specialist)
Wednesday	8:00 STAAR Prep Strategies (Ms. Winston- Began end of January 2014)
	2:10 Math
Thursday	8:00 Math
	1:25 STAAR Prep Strategies (Ms. Winston- Began end of January 2014)
	1:55 Ms. Golde (Dyslexia Specialist)

In the middle of May 2014, Sam qualified for special education services, having been identified as having specific learning disabilities in basic reading, written expression, and math problem solving. After Sam qualified for special education, he no longer followed the above schedule (Table 12) because he received his support in the classroom from a special education teacher, rather than from Ms. Golde (for dyslexia) and Ms. Winston (for STAAR test-taking strategies). Although this schedule change happened at the very end of the year, Ms. White said she could see a change in Sam when he was no longer being pulled out of the classroom. She expressed "I have already seen a difference in his demeanor. He has support coming into the classroom and he doesn't have to worry about

keeping up with all the different teachers he was seeing for intervention" (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014).

Case selection: Sam

Sam was initially selected to be a focal student for this study because he was receiving interventions as a struggling student and as a student identified with dyslexia. As the year progressed, a decision was made by the progress-monitoring committee to test him for special education services, which provided me an opportunity to observe the process. Sam's story is important in that it shows the complex dimensions of students across several instructional contexts. Sam's academic struggles were visible across settings, including the interventionists' classrooms; however, there were moments when he exhibited confidence. He seemed to generally exhibit patterns of helplessness (Dweck, 2000) and he only seemed to choose to participate when he was confident that he would be successful (Johnston, 2012). His peers' classroom interactions with him seemed to contribute further to his social identification as a confused or struggling student. In addition, it demonstrates that Sam, like Zoe and Bob, was trying to make sense of what he was learning. Last, it raises questions about continuity of instruction, and demonstrates that receiving instruction in four different classrooms (math intervention, Ms. Golde's, Ms. Winston's, and Ms. White's classrooms) seemed to contribute to Sam's frustration and widened the gaps in his understandings.

Sam in the classroom

Even when Sam was in Ms. White's classroom for reading and writing instruction, my observations of him were limited in the sense that he rarely talked and there was not a lot of group work during this time. The emphasis was on writing instruction and often the lessons were around thirty to forty-five minutes long; then

students had independent writing time (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). As I said, Sam was a very quiet student; however, there were moments when he felt confident and would speak. In the next sections I discuss the visibility of Sam's struggles: Sam was a student who usually did not participate in classroom discussions; however, there were examples when he appeared to feel confident with his answers and would then participate.

Visibility of struggle

Sam usually started his day early with Ms. White, coming in before school for math tutoring. During this one-on-one time he seemed focused and engaged with his work (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). One-on-one instruction seemed to be beneficial for Sam anytime Ms. White could do so, which was not often once all of the other students arrived. Otherwise, Sam appeared distracted, and Ms. White had to remind him to get to work many times. She would say, "Sam, I need that done. What are you doing?" (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - April 2014). Ms. White also said,

> He has such big gaps in his learning and he really doesn't know what questions to ask to help himself out. I have to help him one on one ALL the time or he just can't/won't do it. When [Sam] feels a little bit of success I really see a difference in his demeanor." (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014)

The example Ms. White provided for the statement she made above was regarding Sam's learning how to multiply. Multiplication was something that Sam had been having difficulty learning. Ms. White worked with him before school on math and had tried to teach him how to multiply using several different strategies. Finally, he found a strategy that worked for him and he found success with multiplication. Similar to Bob, Sam generally exhibited a pattern of helplessness (Dweck, 2000) in the classroom (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). His distraction also seemed to be a factor in understanding

assignments. During one observation, Ms. White broke up the class into groups and each group was doing a different reading activity. She explained each assignment to the whole class, because during the week, every group would do all assignments. After the groups got together, Sam did not know what he was to do and his friend had to explain the assignment to him (Fieldnotes, December 21, 2013). Sam's peers were helpful and did not appear to mind repeating instructions for him.

For another group project, Sam was paired with two other boys and their assignment was to create an island and write a story about the island (See Figure 25).

Figure 25: Sam's "Big Nose" Island

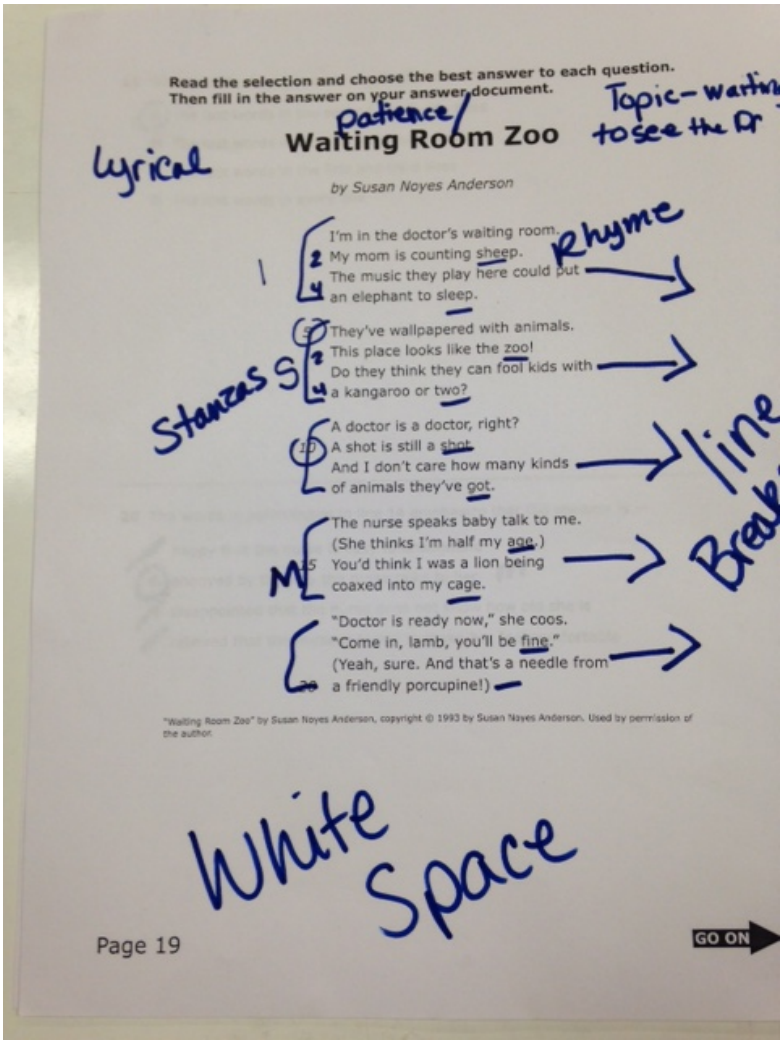
When all of the islands were complete, Ms. White hung them on the hallway bulletin board. I asked Sam to tell me about the island and his role in the project. Sam

replied to my questions with very few words. He told me that his contribution to the project was the coloring of the island. When I asked him if he had anything to do with what they decided to put on the island he responded "hMMM" (not an affirmative or a negative). He then told me that the island's name was "Big Nose Island" and that they had just come up "with a random name." I then asked him what the story was about and he said, "The story is about dinos and how it [the island] was formed." He then told me that he had not written nor contributed to the story, but that one of the boys in the group had written it on his own. Last, I asked him what he had learned from this project and he replied, "To have fun" (Audio Recording, May 8, 2014). This example seems to demonstrate that Sam participated in group projects only in ways in which he would feel successful. It seemed that he wanted his peers to think of him as capable, and he was unwilling to risk being seen in another way. All of these examples demonstrate the visible struggles Sam experienced in Ms. White's classroom. They also show that Sam's peers seemed to recognize his confusions and difficulties with the work, contributing further to his social identification as a student who struggled.

Confidence

There were times, however, when Sam would share his work in Ms. White's class. A pattern I was able to discern was that when Sam appeared to feel confident that his answer would be right, he would join the conversation. One example of this was when Ms. White was teaching a lesson about analyzing and responding to poetry. Previously she had taught them a process called TAPS (Topic, All Elements of Poetry, Personal Response, and Similes, Metaphors, and Personification). Interactively, Ms. White and her students analyzed the poem "Waiting Room Zoo" by Susan Noyes Anderson (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Waiting Room Zoo



Students were not called on; they could respond when they felt they had something to contribute. Ms. White did not analyze the poem in TAPS order. First, she had the students read the poem twice—once aloud and then to themselves. Next, she asked the students to point out any similes and other poetry elements. Then she asked them for a personal response to the poem, and last she asked what the topic of the poem was. This is

when Sam answered, “Waiting. Waiting to see the doctor” (Audio Recording, April 4, 2014). In this example, Sam had a lot of time to think and to hear what other students were saying. He had heard the poem read aloud and could read it as many times as he wanted since it was on the document camera. And because Ms. White had gone through this process with the class before, he knew that she was going to ask what the topic was. Having time to think and predictability of questions seemed to be a contributing factor for Sam to feel confident to speak out in class.

Sam in the intervention classroom

Sam’s case is an example of how his struggles were visible in all of the contexts in which I observed him (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - May 2014). Over the course of the school year, as Sam’s struggles continued, the progress-monitoring committee decided to add reading interventions focused on STAAR (high-stakes test) preparation with Ms. Winston to his schedule at the end of January 2014 (Fieldnotes, January, 2014). In the following sections I discuss his struggles in Ms. Winston’s classroom and how he tried to make sense of his learning and understand the purpose of reading.

Visibility of struggle

As in Ms. White’s classroom, Sam’s struggles in Ms. Winston’s class were visible. When Sam was in Ms. Winston’s classroom he was one of five students, and was there to develop strategies to pass the STAAR (high-stakes test) reading assessment. Both Ms. Winston and Ms. White were concerned about Sam’s reading comprehension, and that concern was the predominant reason he was tested for special education services. Similar to Zoe, Sam did not qualify for special education in the area that the teachers were most concerned about. Ms. Winston said, “He’s [Sam] got big comprehension

issues. That's not what he qualified for. He's qualifying for decoding skills and fluency. That's what the dyslexia is work on, but he's struggling with his application" (Teacher Interview, May 8, 2014). Sam appeared most comfortable in Ms. Winston's classroom when he worked one-on-one with her. Like in Ms. White's class, he rarely spoke and did not seem willing to take risks that might embarrass him.

One day Ms. Winston had a STAAR passage for the students to work on that was a play. She told them they were going to read the play, which was similar to "The Three Bears," together and they were going to read it in different voices because that might help them understand it. First she modeled reading the voice of Papa Bear, then Goldilocks. Then she asked the students to pick a part so they could read the play aloud together. Sam chose to read the Baby Bear voice, but when it was his turn, he seemed embarrassed and said, "I can't," so another student took his part. Even after hearing and seeing the other students, Sam never participated in the reading of the play (Fieldnotes, February 18, 2014). Sam appeared to be uncomfortable reading aloud in front of the small group and avoided taking part in the activity.

In Ms. Winston's class Sam needed many reminders to use his strategies and to prove his answers when working on the STAAR-like passages. Of all the students in this group he appeared to need the most help, and Ms. Winston would often work with him one-on-one, prompting and questioning him as he worked through a passage. For example, Sam was finishing working on a passage that he had started the previous day. Ms. Winston told him to reread the passage and when he was done she would read the questions and answer choices for him (an accommodation he received because he was identified as dyslexic). Sam appeared to be reading the passage and looked like he was engaged (Fieldnotes, April 16, 2014). When he was done reading the following exchange occurred.

Sam: I'm ready.

Ms. Winston: Do you want me to start at the beginning?

Sam: I get these (problems 1 and 2). I don't get this one (problem 3).

Ms. Winston: *Reads problem 3 to him.*

Sam: *Makes his choice and explains it.*

Ms. Winston: What do your strategies tell you to do?

Sam: Look back?

Ms. Winston: Yes. (Fieldnotes, April 16, 2014)

Sam then looked back and made his selection, and this process continued for each of the questions. Ms. Winston sat next to Sam and asked him for each question, "Where did you get your information? The more you prove your answers the better you will do next week (on STAAR)" (Fieldnotes, April 16, 2014). As she worked with Sam, the other students in the class worked on their own, and once Ms. Winston reminded all of the students to "show proof." When each student completed the passage, Ms. Winston graded it. Sam got two of the 11 questions wrong, and one of them was question 3, the one he had said he did not get. This question was asking for the meaning of the word "nocturnal." Ms. Winston told Sam that the strategy she had taught him, to read the next sentence, would not work for this question. In this case he would have had to continue reading and to think in order to select the right answer (Fieldnotes, April 16, 2014). This example provides further insight into Sam as a student. He still required one-on-one instruction and constant reminders, even in a small group setting. In addition, it is also an example

where the strategies taught do not always work, and demonstrates that students need to be able to have multiple strategies to choose from and to have the ability to use them flexibly.

Making sense of learning: reading to answer questions

As he participated more in Ms. Winston's classroom, which was focused on STAAR (high-stakes test) preparation, Sam seemed to come to a different understanding of the purpose of reading than he had at the start of the year. At the beginning of the year, I observed Sam occasionally reading a book in Ms. White's classroom (Fieldnotes, September 2013 - December 2013). His favorites were *Big Nate* by Lincoln Peirce and books by Mike Lupica because they were about sports, something he was interested in (Fieldnotes, September 2013). He seemed proud that he could read chapter books, rather than picture books, when he said, "In third grade I read just like those picture books and stuff, but now in fourth grade, I'm reading chapter books" (Student Interview, November 5, 2013). As the year went on Sam was not completing his book projects, and when Ms. White took status of the class (she did this once a week to record what the students were independently reading) he did not have a book or had dropped a book (Sam's Status of the Class). Sam told me that he liked *Big Nate* books because "he's always getting in trouble and going to detention, and his locker is messy with junk" and he liked "the characters and how they act" (Student Interview, November 5, 2013). As the year went on he seemed to come to conclude that he was learning to read in order to answer questions. One of the first indicators of this view of reading occurred while Sam and I

were walking to Ms. Winston's classroom. I asked him what he did in her classroom and he said that they read passages, and she helped him figure out how to answer the questions that were going to be on the STAAR test (Fieldnotes, February 18, 2014). This conversation happened two weeks after Sam began attending Ms. Winston's class. During our last interview we had the following exchange:

Researcher: How is reading and writing different in Ms. Winston's class than in Ms. White's class?

Sam: Ms. White's class is just where you work and [Ms. Winston's] is where you have to read and learn to use your strategies and stuff.

Researcher: You don't learn strategies in [Ms. White's] class?

Sam: Well, yeah we do. Almost all of them are like [Ms. Winston's].

Researcher: What are some of the strategies that you've learned this year?
Sam: We found the answers, I try to look for it in the passage and if it's not in there then that couldn't be the answer. (Student Interview, May 21, 2014)

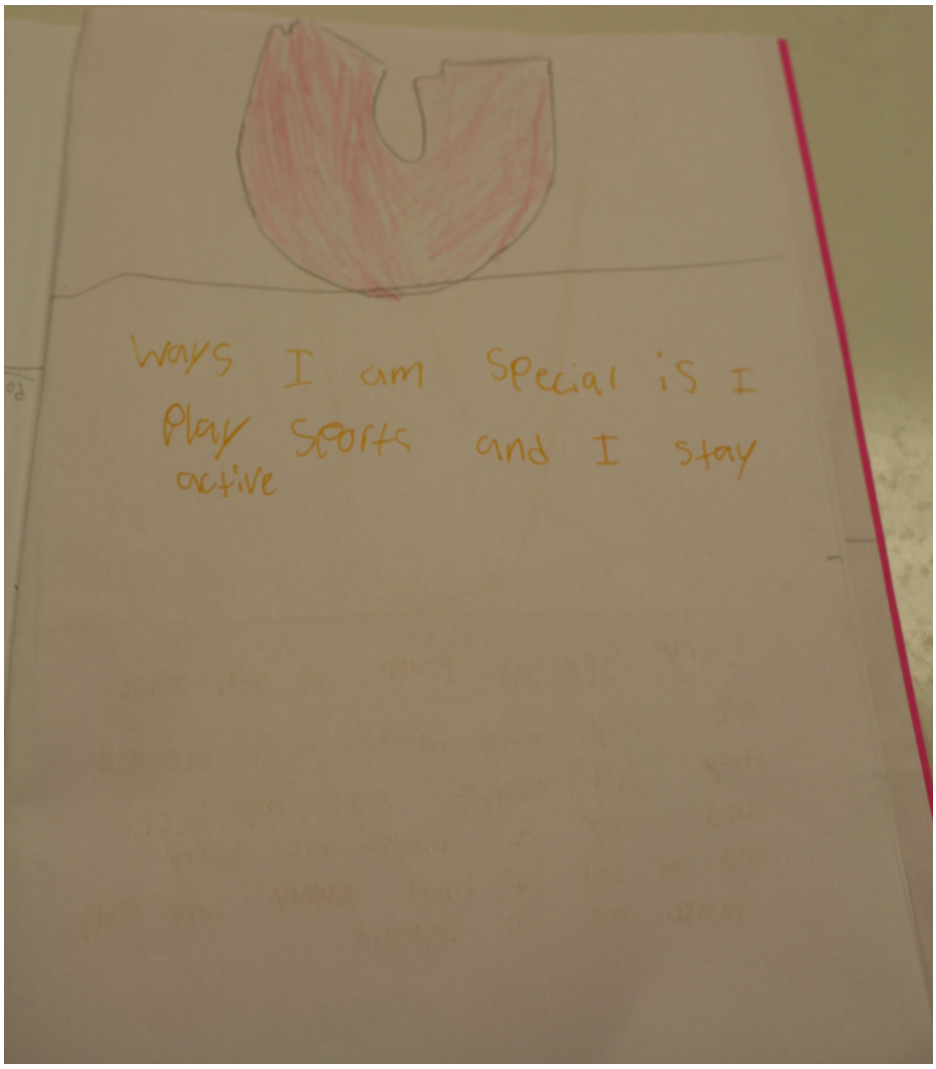
Sam describes reading and writing as work in Ms. White's classroom and says that in Ms. Winston's classroom he has to read and use strategies. The only texts Sam read in Ms. Winston's room were STAAR-like passages. Even though he acknowledges that he learned strategies in Ms. White's class, when asked what strategies he learned, he responds, "we found the answers." He does not say how he uses the strategies he has been taught to make meaning when he reads a book or any other kind of text. Also, he was not reading in class near the end of the year, nor was he completing his book projects, as previously stated. This seems to indicate that, as Sam tried to make sense of what he was learning, he decided that the purpose for learning strategies was to answer the questions in a STAAR-like reading passage.

Sam: A Portrait

For most of the school year, Sam had to navigate the social, instructional, and teacher expectations as he moved between four different instructional contexts (Ms. White's, Ms. Golde's, Ms. Winston's, and the math interventionist's classrooms). All of the teachers, including the interventionists with whom Sam worked saw him struggle throughout the year. Ms. White said, "The interventionists were not seeing any progress or retention of concepts as well" (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014). Ms. Winston (the reading interventionist) had a similar view and said, "One day the information is there and he can read an article and infer, and the next day he can't at all" (Teacher Interview, May 8, 2014). Ms. White felt that all of the pull-out interventions were not helpful to Sam; his struggles continued during the year and in mid-May he qualified for special education services. At the end of the year, Ms. White administered a Fountas and Pinnell Informal Reading Inventory, and she said that Sam "did not show any growth" (Fieldnotes, May 2014). When I asked Sam how he felt about seeing many teachers during the day he replied, "I don't really mind as long as they're helping me with stuff. Specially dyslexia." I then asked him, "What does that mean to you, dyslexia?" And he replied, "I just get my b's and d's wrong" (Student Interview, May 21, 2014). This was the only time I heard Sam refer to dyslexia.

Sam was a quiet student, but had moments when he appeared to be confident and would participate in class. This was true in both Ms. Winston and Ms. White's classrooms. When asked to describe himself during our last interview he said, "Play sports, stay active, fast, likes to write, and good son" (Student Interview, May 21, 2014). Also, for his Z to A book on his "U" Page—What Makes You Unique—he repeats that he is special because he plays sports and stays active (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: U from Sam's Z to A Book



My interpretation of these two data samples, and my observations and conversations with Sam, is that his sense of self had very little to do with school. He focused on what he was most successful at, which was playing sports. For Sam it seemed to be important to him that he find success at a task in order for him to publicly engage in it. This was exemplified in the ways he chose to participate in Ms. White's classroom. There was also one moment I observed in Ms. Winston's class when Sam appeared to

feel confident and participated in the discussion. The last day Ms. Winston would meet with Sam's group before the STAAR test, she reviewed all of the reading concepts and strategies she had taught. As Ms. Winston and the students went through each concept they discussed it and Ms. Winston related it to one of the passages they had worked on. When they got to Author's Purpose, Sam became very engaged and joined in the conversation. Each slide (the review was on a PowerPoint) had a short paragraph and the student had to decide if the author's purpose was to inform, persuade, or entertain. Sam answered each of the three examples of Author's Purpose correctly. For the rest of the review, Sam did not answer any questions (Fieldnotes, April 21, 2014). These examples seem to reinforce Sam's choice to participate only when he was sure he would be successful. Dweck and Johnston (2012) theorize that when students tend to participate only in activities they think will make them look smart they have a fixed-performance frame of learning. Sam also demonstrated this learning frame when he rushed to be the first one done with his work.

Sam's case highlights that even with a systematic intervention and RtI process in place, it may not be enough. Ms. White articulated this when she said, "Sam was already being pulled for every possible intervention, so the [progress-monitoring committee] didn't really prove to be helpful" (Ms. White's Portrait of Sam, May 29, 2014). It also is an example of how the lack of continuity of instruction or fractured instruction can further frustrate a student and, rather than help, can hinder the student's learning.

LOOKING ACROSS ZOE, BOB, AND SAM

Wortham's (2004) theory showed the tension that Maurice (an African-American male) experienced in the classroom between wanting to be recognized as a "good" student and fitting in with his male peers. The cases of Zoe, Bob, and Sam were examples

of not only the tensions they experienced in relationship to social identification, but also how social identification shifted across contexts. Wortham found tensions within a context between competing identifications. My study not only supports this finding, but also found that social identifications could shift in different contexts. This shift was most notable for Sam as he moved between the classroom and the playground. In the classroom, his peers recognized his academic struggles and tried to help him by doing most of the academic work. However, on the playground, Sam was seen as a leader and accomplished soccer player.

Combining Wortham's social identification theory and Dweck's (2000) self-theories, I was able to demonstrate that motivation and the goals a student sets play a role in social identification. Bob was socially identified in Ms. Nelson's classroom as a student who needed help consistently and who needed someone to sit beside him in order to complete his work. In Ms. Wakeman's classroom; however, Bob appeared to be comfortable and participated in the lessons more than the other students in his group. This finding supports Wortham's theory that learning and social identification are intertwined. Ms. Wakeman provided limited space for students to respond and to take risks. Her classroom was structured and had strict expectations. This environment seemed to make Bob feel safe, so he participated more often than he did in Ms. Nelson's classroom. Bob also provided an example of the influence motivation and goal setting has on social identification. When he was given an assignment in his fourth grade classroom that required a presentation, Bob went from helpless to motivated, seemingly because he wanted to be seen as capable by his audience. This finding was important to building a theory of social identification that includes an individual's motivation (Dweck, 2000).

Zoe seemed to experience similar tensions of social identification as Maurice did. She self-identified as dyslexic; however, she wanted to be seen by her peers as a student

who tried and was capable. These findings demonstrate the complexities of social identification and the powerful influence that context plays. Recognizing what makes a student comfortable in one situation could help to make him or her comfortable in another. Maloch (2005) found that the two boys in her study shifted identities from "struggling reader" to valued participating members of the classroom when their teacher built upon their oral skills and taught them conversational techniques. Mae, the teacher in Worthy et al. (2012) showed that by focusing on a student's interest in reading, a previously quiet student became comfortable participating in the read-aloud discussions. Zoe's case adds to this research by showing that context and the teacher makes a difference in how a student is socially identified. In Ms. Nelson's room, Zoe was provided opportunities, accommodations, and was viewed as capable. The situation was different in Ms. Golde's classroom where she was continually reminded, both verbally and in the way she was instructed that she was dyslexic.

Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) and Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, and Smith (2011) found that it was important for students to experience continuity of instruction across contexts. My study found that Bob experienced very few instructional opportunities that were aligned between special and general education. In my observations, Zoe and Sam did not experience any instruction that was coordinated between Ms. Golde, or Ms. Winston, and Ms. Nelson, their classroom teacher. A unique aspect of my findings regarding Zoe, Bob, and Sam was that they each searched to make sense of what they were learning across the contexts. This finding adds complexity to research that has looked at continuity of instruction across contexts.

Zoe, Bob, and Sam's experiences at Brushwood demonstrated how the labels given them by the progress monitoring committee, the teachers' and administrators' beliefs, the instruction they received, and the structures of the school, all contributed to

their sense of self. In addition, their experiences supported Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory of the intertwining of learning and social identification. These findings further add to Wortham's theory by giving voice to the students, so that we can see how socially identification contributes to their sense of self.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the conclusions I have drawn from the findings provided in Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, I discuss the importance of my study, how my study contributes to research and theory, implications for practice, limitations of my study, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

This study grew out of my understandings that literacy is a social practice and situated in broader social relations, not a decontextualized set of isolated skills. My research interests also came out of my experiences working with students requiring special education services. Working with Collin was an eye opening experience for me. I realized that my instruction was not meeting his needs, and that I was not recognizing all of the literacy strengths he brought to school because I was too focused on his being a student with autism and wanting him to pass the high-stakes test. Further, I began this study knowing that labeling students is complicated, but a part of our educational system. I understood that identifiers provide limited insights into student learning, and that these identifiers often influence students' sense of self. Therefore, I embarked upon this study through the examination of these questions:

1. How are students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled socially identified across literacy instructional contexts within the school?
    a. How do administrators contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic and learning disabled?
    b. How do teachers contribute to the social identification of students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled?
    c. How do students labeled dyslexic or learning disabled contribute to their own social identification, and what contributions do their peers make to the social identification of these students?

In this chapter, I begin by providing a brief summary of the major findings from the study as they relate to and extend previous literature. I focus my discussion around three major themes related to social identification of students that emerged from this

study in relationship to the administrators, teachers, and students. These themes are: (a) the influences of the intervention and identification process; (b) the contextual messages that influence learning; and (c) the complexities of meeting student needs. This is then followed by the importance of the study, implications for practice and implications for further research.

THE INFLUENCES OF INTERVENTION AND THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams leadership was the driving force for the creation and implementation of the progress-monitoring process, which was central to student identification at Brushwood. Since Texas gives school districts and schools local control in implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) the role of the administrators is crucial, as they are the guiding force behind the identification process. The process Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy implemented had begun seven years before this study, and was continually adjusted, as they found necessary. Under their direction, time was blocked out during the school day to have these meetings, they followed an established protocol, and all committee members knew the expectations. In ongoing support of this process, Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams were regular attendees and participants in the discussions. Additionally they built in a thirty-minute intervention time into the school schedule so that teachers could work with small groups of students and/or individually with students who needed extra support. The focus of this process was to frame all decisions on "the student" and to move past a "let's test mentality" (Administrator Interviews). The administrators led the meetings in such a way that everyone approached special education testing with caution by having many discussions and implementing many interventions – both in the classroom and outside the classroom – before asking for special education testing. However, consistent with Texas' focus on dyslexia as a unique category of

reading difficulty, dyslexia was treated differently. Further, both Ms. Malloy and Dr. Williams felt that Ms. Golde, a member of the progress-monitoring committee, was considered an expert in the area of dyslexia and they relied heavily on her opinion. Also, the teachers had a heightened awareness regarding dyslexia because the administrators had Ms. Golde share her knowledge of dyslexia with the teachers at the beginning of each school year. Therefore, one of the first things asked during a progress-monitoring committee meeting was whether the teacher thought the student was dyslexic. At each meeting of the progress-monitoring committee, approximately eight students were discussed and dyslexia was discussed as a reason for on average three of those students. The result of this was that Brushwood had a higher rate of identifying students with dyslexia than on other elementary campuses in Stoney Pond ISD, demonstrating the influence the administrators' perceptions of expertise and their understandings of student learning have on the special education and dyslexia identification process.

In addition to the administrators, the teachers also influenced the identification process. According to their interviews, Ms. White and Ms. Nelson believed and positioned their students as capable learners, and tried to portray their students as multidimensional during these meetings (Teacher Interviews). They wanted the committee to see all that the student could do as well as the areas they were struggling, seemingly holding a sociocultural/socio-constructivist framework of learning (Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, & Arragones, 2011), that recognizes contextual, social, cultural influences on student learning. Ms. Wakeman, the special education teacher was not present at these meetings; however, both Ms. Golde (the dyslexia specialist) and Ms. Winston (the intervention teacher) were. Their perspectives were very different and seemed to come from what Risko and colleagues considered a cognitive/constructivist perspective, which views students as lacking in particular skills. They were quick in

wanting to understand a student based on an identifier, such as dyslexic or learning disabled. These meetings started a process where students learning and identity would be significantly impacted. Choices were made in these meetings to provide accommodations and interventions within learning contexts that positioned students in particular ways. In an effort to understand a student's learning needs, identifiers and labels were assigned that resulted in interventions that focused on teaching skills the students were deficient in (Risko, et al., 2011).

As demonstrated by Zoe and Sam, who qualified in areas other than what their teachers had originally referred them for, this process did not answer all of the questions surrounding their learning or their teachers' concerns. Johnston (2011) found that, even though the RtI process is meant to provide intervention instruction, with the advent of RtI there has been a focus on identifying students with a disability rather than on "prevention instruction models, recognizing the complexity of literacy" (p. 529). Bradley, Danielson, and Doolittle (2005) asserted that many students have been misidentified or over identified for special education over the past few decades. Brushwood seemed to be cautious in identifying students for special education, and tried many interventions before testing students, yet Zoe and Sam's stories support Bradley, et al. findings of students in that the special education categories they qualified for did not address their teachers' concerns, nor did they provide an inclusive picture of their learning. Zoe received interventions for math, and instruction for dyslexia, at the beginning of the year. Ms. Nelson's concerns regarding Zoe's math learning grew until a decision was made to test for special education, however, Zoe did not qualify for special education services in math, but in basic reading. Sam's story was similar in that all of his teachers, Ms. Golde, Ms. White, and Ms. Winston were concerned about his reading comprehension. After the special education testing was completed, Sam did not qualify with a specific learning

disability in reading comprehension but instead in basic reading, which includes fluency and word identification. These two examples raise questions in relationship to the level of authority given to the identification categories of disability, and the impact they have on student's learning opportunities and constructions of identity

CONTEXTUAL MESSAGES

Another set of findings of this study demonstrated that there were many contextual messages that influenced students' social identification, including (a) the language used to describe students, (b) teachers' beliefs about instruction, and (c) pull-out instruction. The findings in this section support the outcomes of Wortham's (2004) study in that local cognitive models influenced local models of social identification and learning. Wortham outlines Lave (1993) and Wertsch's (1998) three components that facilitate cognition and learning: the person, the activity, and the situation (p. 724). The teachers' beliefs about cognition influenced the local model of social identification and learning in their respective classrooms, through the type of instruction they provided, and how they positioned and situated the student.

Language

These findings support Wortham's (2004, 2006) study that found that local (contextual) identifiers influence learning and the construction of students' identities. Ms. Golde continually used the label of *dyslexia* to describe Zoe and the other students she worked with. Also, the prevalent use of the term *smart* across contexts was an integral part of the culture at Brushwood Elementary. The term *smart* was used by teachers to describe students and in the naming of rewards (i.e., smart beads, smarties). These words

are examples of language that is present in many classrooms today. Additionally, the terms *dyslexic* and *smart* were used regularly by the administrators and teachers in the progress-monitoring meetings. As Johnston (2012) implicates, the social identifiers used in the institution of school help solidify fixed-performance beliefs. In her exploration of smartness as a cultural construct, Hatt (2012) states that smartness is "primarily perceived as nonrelational, impersonal, rational, and scientifically objective" (p. 456) which is similar to Johnston's fixed-performance frame of learning; that intelligence is a fixed trait and cannot be changed through learning. Hatt shows that what students learn about smartness has powerful implications for students' constructions of their academic identities. She calls for a disruption of smartness in school practices in order to empower "students to frame and author their lives" (p. 457). Students are identified or labeled and then teachers, peers, parents, etc. often view that child through that lens – the student also views him or herself through that lens. A label such as *gifted,* give a student the conception that they are *smart*, versus a label such as *learning disabled* positions a student as *not smart*.

Teachers' beliefs about instruction

Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy both expressed beliefs in differentiated instruction, and articulated this belief to their teachers. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White instructed their students in literacy using a reading and writing workshop model, which they and their administrators believed was an effective approach in meeting diverse student needs. However, this instructional approach was not supported in the specialists or special education classrooms, nor was it advocated for once a student was identified with "an imposed label" (Administrator Interview, September 5, 2013). Neither the administrators, nor the specialists seemed to consider that students identified with a disability may

benefit from participating in a reading and writing workshop model for some of their instruction. Rather they seemed to hold on to a belief that students that were identified as dyslexic or having a learning disability in reading required instruction that focused on the teaching of specific decoding skills only. Therefore, these students had very few opportunities to read authentic texts, and practice the skills they were taught.

The data suggested that Ms. Nelson and Ms. White felt they had the ability to meet Zoe and Sam's needs and it is an enactment of the administrator's view that "all of our students are all of our students." Unlike some of the teachers in Triplett's (2007) study, Ms. Nelson and Ms. White continued to feel responsible for the instruction of their students identified as struggling. They also believed that they were capable of meeting these students' academic needs, and saw these students as capable of participating in their classroom community and in the instruction they planned while they differentiated for each student's needs. Ms. Golde Ms. Wakeman, and Ms. Winston's reading instruction was based on teaching decontextualized reading skills and they did not take into account social interactions, nor did they consider that learning is not "completed in a single event" (Wortham, p. 725). They, specifically Ms. Golde and Ms. Wakeman, believed that their students needed instruction that was skill based. A result of the instructional approaches enacted in the specialists' classrooms was that the students struggled to make sense of and apply what they learned across contexts, and they had limited opportunities to participate in general education classroom activities that may have been beneficial to their academic growth.

Pull-out

The administrators supported pull-out interventions as part of the Tier 2 RtI process. Also, students who failed the high-stakes test (STAAR) automatically received

pull-out interventions. Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy hired certified teachers to fill the interventionist positions. They were also were very direct about the type of instruction they wanted the reading interventionists to provide. The focus in the reading interventionist classrooms was on providing students with skills, so they could pass the STAAR test. Assaf (2008) found that high-stakes testing influenced instructional decisions and created situations where teachers had to wrestle with a choice between district mandated curriculum and the type of instruction they felt would meet their students' needs. This study supports those findings in that the administrators insisted that the reading interventionists have their students work on STAAR-like passages every day. It also supports Assaf's (2008) finding that high-stakes testing often creates complicate ethical decisions for teachers. Ms. Winston, a reading interventionist, expressed her concern about having her students read STAAR-like passages every day rather than providing some time for book clubs or discussion of texts (Teacher Interview, May 8 & 28, 2014). However, she followed her administrators' mandate.

Ms. Winston felt tension between what she was told to do by the administrators and the type of instruction she wanted to provide for her students. With this in mind, I suggest that institutional factors are an additional component in the facilitation of cognition and learning. The instructional approach Ms. Winston used in her classroom was done at the directive of her administrators, not because of her beliefs (Teacher Interview, May 8 & 28, 2014). These types of decisions limit the instruction these student's receive and again is focused on the student's perceived deficits. Valencia and Buly (2005) cautioned against overgeneralizing the needs of students who fail the high-

stakes assessment, but at Brushwood, the high-stakes test was a major decision point even though the administrators said that other data should be considered.

For Sam, pull-out interventions overtook much of his day. He missed much of the science and social studies curriculum because he was out of the class most days during the instruction of these subjects. Ms. White expressed her concerns and felt that Sam's schedule was not beneficial to his learning. Ms. Nelson was also concerned about how much of the curriculum her students that were pulled for interventions missed, and felt that they (the teachers) had to be careful about the decisions they made about what work the students were responsible for and the messages they were sending their students about what was important. Even though Ms. White thought that Sam's schedule was detrimental, Sam said it was all right because he felt each of his teachers was helping him. However, he also seemed to come away with an understanding that the purpose of reading was to answer questions.

COMPLEXITIES OF MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

An issue that arose consistently over the year from the general education teachers was a lack of collaboration between them and the special education teachers. Kershner (2007) found that it was important that teachers share the knowledge they gain about a student as they work with him or her. Also, Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) found that administrative support is necessary for successful inclusion classrooms. Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy put a complex collaborative RtI process in place, but then once a student was identified as dyslexic or requiring special education services, there was no

time for collaboration built into the schedule. Dr. Williams and Ms. Malloy hoped that the collaboration between general and special education teachers would happen naturally.

Although Ms. White and Ms. Nelson were able to successfully coordinate a few projects for the special education students to participate in with Ms. Wakeman, they were increasingly frustrated with the lack of communication and collaboration as the year went on. Ms. Wakeman felt she was communicating with Ms. White and Ms. Nelson when she had time, but her schedule was very demanding. Even though Ms. White and Ms. Nelson did not collaborate with Ms. Golde, they did not express frustration or concerns regarding this lack of collaboration. Ms. Golde did not seem to feel a need to collaborate since she was specifically targeting the needs of dyslexic students. She repeatedly referred to the instruction she provided as a program and said, "Mine is a program. We see the repetition. I harp on it until they're sick of hearing it" (Teacher Interview, May 27, 2014). Again, this lack of collaboration made it difficult for students to make sense of what they were learning; continuity was missing and students' instructional opportunities were limited.

Meeting the needs of a diverse classroom of learners is difficult. Having students pulled out of a class adds more complexity to this task. Without collaboration, students are not offered opportunities to engage in different ways, forcing teachers to make complex decisions about what is important, and students lack continuity of instruction (Johnston, Allington, & Afflerbach, 1985; Allington, 1986; Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, & Smith, 2011). Also, asking students to navigate several instruction contexts can be confusing, and the messages they receive about their learning may not be the messages we want them to take away

All of my focal students (Zoe, Bob, and Sam) in some way tried to make sense of what they were learning. Zoe tried to make sense of the phonics rules she was learning in

Ms. Golde's class by attempting to apply them to the reading she was expected to do in Ms. Nelson's class. As Brushwood tried to meet Sam's needs he was pulled more and more from his classroom and seemed to come to understand that the purpose of reading was to answer questions. Although Bob became an eager and engaged learner when given an assignment that would end in a presentation with an audience, he most often exhibited attributes of learned helplessness (Dweck, 2000).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In the following sections, I discuss the importance of my study first in relationship to the contributions and additional perspectives it provides to the already existing body of literature and then how it contributes to the theories of self (Dweck, 2000) and social identification (Wortham, 2004, 2006).

Contributions to research

My study contributes to the current body of research by: (a) supporting previous research findings that explicated the importance of school administrators and by extending that body of research to demonstrate their role in the social identification of students (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Stanovich & Jordon, 1998); (b) adding onto research that looks at contextual influences on student learning, and by providing a glimpse of how struggling readers and learning disabled students (in reading) navigate multiple contexts from a sociocultural/socio-cognitive perspective (Allington, 1986; Johnston, Allignton & Afflerbach, 1985; Wonder-McDowell, Retuzel, & Smith, 2011); (c) adding onto research that examines teachers beliefs about instruction of struggling readers and learning disabled students (in reading), and how they contribute to the social identification and learning of these students (Bandura, 1993; Dudley-Marling, 2004;

Fuchs, 2009; Triplett, 2007; Wooflson & Brady, 2009); and (d) adding to the body of research regarding student's sense of self, and making a specific contribution to how struggling readers and learning disabled students (in reading), as well as their peers, contribute to their social identification (Maloch, 2005; McCarthey, 2001; Wortham, 2004; Worthy et al., 2012).

Administrators

My review of research found that administrator support in the form of professional development, decreased class size, incorporation of planning and collaboration time into the school schedule, and articulating expectations of sharing duties with special education teachers is necessary, yet is often lacking in schools (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Fuchs, 2009; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). Ms. Williams and Ms. Malloy's beliefs and approaches directly influenced the dyslexia and special education identification process at Brushwood Elementary and influenced the instructional approaches. My study demonstrates the important and influential role that administrators play in the social identification of students and how that identification can then influence their learning and the opportunities they are provided.

Context

Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) and Allington (1986) showed that students in remedial reading programs had difficulty applying what they were learning across contexts. Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, and Smith (2011) found that aligning intervention reading instruction with the general education classroom instruction accelerated struggling second graders reading growth. Dudley-Marling (2004) and Triplett (2007) found in their studies that students who were learning disabled in reading

or struggling experienced very different instruction based on teacher beliefs in different contexts. Maloch (2005) said,

> It is important to consider both the events that we make available to students in the name of literacy learning and how these events capitalize on or discount students' strengths and views of themselves. Providing a wide spectrum of classroom events…offers opportunities for students to engage in different ways (p. 140)

My study supports this statement in that the instruction made available to my focal students both capitalized on and/or discounted their strengths and views of themselves. Ms. Golde's continual identifying her students as dyslexic and her belief about their needs, influenced her instructional choices, and contributed to their view of themselves. In addition, my study adds onto this body of research with findings that support the previous research. Continuity of instruction is important and my focal students continually tried to make sense of what they were learning. Also, my study demonstrates with Sam's story that in trying to meet a student's needs they may end up frustrated and experience fractured instruction because they are instructed in too many different contexts. Therefore, this study points to the importance of providing students continuity, and each context contributes to a student's social identification and learning.

Teachers

The teachers in my study were driven by their beliefs, and those beliefs directly contributed to student's social identification and learning. Triplett (2007) found in her study that once a student was identified as a struggling reader the classroom teacher no longer felt responsible for that students reading instruction. This was often because the teacher did not feel he/she had the necessary skills to adequately meet the students' needs. This study tells a counter story. Ms. Nelson and Ms. White, the classroom teachers maintained responsibility for their students' learning. Both of these teachers were strong

advocates for their students. By remaining responsible for these students and advocating for them, Ms. Nelson and Ms. White contributed to the social identification of these students as capable.

Students

Last, my study adds to the body of research that has examined identity or sense of self by providing understandings into how students contribute to their own and each other's social identification. When Bob was provided with a project that offered him an opportunity to present to an audience, I observed an engaged learner, which was different from what I usually observed. The case of Sam supports McCarthey's (2001) findings that literacy was not an important facet to the construction of struggling readers' identities. However, Zoe and Bob presented a much more complex view of how literacy contributed to their identity. For Zoe, she was determined to continue to try and wanted to be seen by her peers as a reader. In Bob's case, he wanted to learn to read, but found it difficult and was unwilling to try on his own, unless the assignment was motivating to him. This shows the complexity and multidimensionality of student's contributions to their social identification and learning.

Overall contributions to research

Much of the previous research on collaborative teaching focuses on the administrators and teachers, and the issues surrounding implementation (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Woolfson & Brady, 2009). My study adds to this body of research by showing the influence disconnected instruction has on the social identification of students, as well as on their learning. Another way my study has contributed to the research that looks at continuity or alignment of instruction (Johnston, Allington, Afflerbach, 1985; Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, & Smith (2011) was that my focal

students searched to make sense of what they were learning across the contexts. This complexity demonstrates that students are interested and are searching to understand how to use and apply what they are learning across contexts and situations. Further, my study provides a counter story to Triplett (2007). Ms. White and Ms. Nelson felt capable of teaching all of their students and were the catalysts in collaborating with Ms. Wakeman, so that the learning disabled students had the opportunity to participate in some classroom projects. This finding was significant because it indicates some general education teachers want to work with the specialized teachers on their campus and feel capable of instructing all students in their classrooms. Last, Zoe, Bob, and Sam's experiences support Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory of the intertwining of learning and social identification and add to it by giving voice to the students and providing insight into how socially identification contributes to students' sense of self. Finally, this study contributes to the current body of literature regarding dyslexic and learning disabled students by providing a comprehensive examination of school context, administrators' interpretations of policy, teachers' beliefs and approaches to instruction, and how these influence the instruction and social identification of students.

Contributions to theory

In understanding the social identification of students across instructional contexts within Brushwood Elementary, I framed my study using social identification theory (Wortham 2004, 2006) and self-theories (Dweck, 2000; Johnston, 2012). The findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 offers an explanation for the contributions administrators, teachers, and peers made to the social identification of the students, and how students contributed to their own social identification. Together these theories helped to provide

insight into the process of understanding the social identification of students across instruction contexts.

Wortham's (2004, 2006) theory is an important element in illustrating the connection between social identification and learning. His research showed that student identities develop as the student interacts with the curriculum. This process was evident in the case of Bob as he prepared for Reading Restaurant and his Famous Texan presentation. Bob, who in his classroom was socially identified as learning disabled, and as one who did not usually engage in work, showed both his teacher and his peers another dimension to his identity during these projects. Wortham recognizes the influences of structure, activity, and situation on learning, and he draws on McDermott's (1977) concept that learning is "change in the relations between persons and their situation in a way that allows for the accomplishment of new activities" (p. 127). However, Wortham focused on how his students shifted their identity around a particular type of activity, literature discussions, over time – in this case becoming more competent at defending and making academic arguments. In the case of Bob, his identity shifted dramatically for these projects and then reverted when the projects were over. Adding the lens of Dweck's (2000) self-theories allowed me to examine Bob across the settings. Most days Bob presented as a student who believed his intelligence was a fixed attribute in the general education classroom and he exhibited attributes of learned helplessness. He avoided difficult tasks and was usually even unwilling to try, but during these projects he presented himself as an engaged learner and was socially identified by his peers and teachers as capable. Bob's learning during these projects seemed to be motivated by "performance goal" (Dweck, p. 15) and a desire for his audience to see him as capable. Bob appeared to be concerned with how others would see him and wanted to avoid looking dumb by his audience. Combining social identification and self-theory lens

allowed me to come to a deeper understanding of him. Therefore, this study adds a dimension of motivation to the intertwining of learning and social identification.

Also, combining social identification theory and self-theories adds to Wortham's (2004, 2006) findings of tensions between contextual social identification. He found that Maurice experienced tension between wanting to participate in classroom discussions with the girls, and being one of the boys. Zoe also experienced a tension between wanting to be seen as a reader in her classroom, and being a student with dyslexia in Ms. Golde's room. These tensions Zoe (and Maurice) felt were sources of identity struggle, but also provided her with agentive opportunities. Zoe continually strived for her peers to see her as a student who tried in spite of being dyslexic. By combining the two theories, it is possible to understand not only the student's view of their learning and how they were socially identified, but it also provides a lens to understand the teachers and peers. Sam's case presented an example of his peers contributing to his social identification in the classroom as helpless (Dweck, 2000) by not expecting him to share the load with the academic portions of projects. Yet, these same peers saw him as a leader and an athlete on the playground, demonstrating the influence of context on social identification. One difference between my study and Wortham's (2004) was that my focal students' peers did not seem to play as significant a role in their social identification and learning as Wortham found.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

One of the biggest implications of this study for teaching practice is the need for collaborative instruction between general education and specialist teachers and the need for *time* to collaborate. Each of these students experienced different expectations and types of instruction in each context they were instructed, and the lack of coordination and

collaboration among teachers limited their ability to make sense of their learning. Collaboration and coordination need to be priorities in schools to help students understand the purpose for what they are learning and so they can apply the skills and strategies they are taught in different contexts (Johnston, Allington, Afflerbach, 1985).

A second implication is that teachers and administrators need to continually be conscious of the impact of high-stakes testing on student identification and learning. As high-stakes testing continues to be the focus of learning and has influence on the identification of students, students who are identified as struggling or learning disabled may experience instruction that is continually narrowed to the point where literacy in schools will not be a social practice, but will only consist of instruction of decontextualized skills.

A third implication for practice from this study is for teachers and administrators to be aware of how they discuss and identify students across contexts. Ms. Golde often reminded her students that they were dyslexic. There was consistent use of the term smart in classrooms, as well as in naming rewards. Not only should schools try to disrupt the construct of smartness, they should also disrupt the use of social identifiers in general. Doing this will help students see themselves as capable and having potential. In the progress monitoring meetings students were identified as ADHD if they could not attend to a task as long as the teacher thought they should, and if they were struggling with reading the first question was, "Do you think they are dyslexic" (Fieldnotes)? Such terms influence how a student is perceived by the teacher, and could possibly result in how that student perceives him/her self, so it is best to exercise caution, and use language that

describes what a student is doing and how a student is interacting with the curriculum rather than using labels,

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on a variety of data sources collected over the 2013-2014 school year I provided a rich, thick description of the administrators, teachers, and focal students experiences at Brushwood Elementary. Wortham's (2004) social identification theory and Dweck (2000) self-theories, provided a lens through which I could interpret and conceptualize the extensive data that was collected. However, as with any research, this study has limitations. First, data was collected during a school year in one school. Therefore, it is only representative of this school's approaches and the events that occurred during the 2013-2014 school year. My understandings of the focal students may have shifted if I had followed them for another year. Following Sam and Zoe during their fifth grade year might have provided some insights into how special education met or did not meet their educational needs. Second, this study was conducted in two fourth grade classrooms, limiting the participants to the focal students chosen from those classroom populations and the teachers who worked with those students, and therefore did not provide a broader look at the school. Looking across grade levels may have provided a more in-depth understanding of how students were socially identified as they went up in grades. Last, all data was gathered within the school; thus, it does not directly represent the students' literacy practices outside of school, nor does this study include parent voices; their hopes, dreams, and concerns for their child's education. Often students have literacy practices that are not used in schools, so understanding a student's out-of-school literacy would provide a more comprehensive interpretation of their identity.

The findings of this study suggest several lines of inquiry for future research. One is to conduct a longitudinal study of students during their entire k-12 education in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of how students are socially identified in schools, and how social identification contributes to their learning and construction of identity. There are so many factors (high-stakes testing, policy, etc.) that influence the social identification of students in schools that might be addressed in future research: Are the interventions and identification processes in place helpful to student's learning? What pressures do schools and teachers experience that contribute to social identification? Last, what are teachers and administrator's understandings of the labels (struggling, dyslexic, learning disabled) students could be given in schools?

Another line of inquiry would be a designed-based research study that brought together general and special education teachers. This study would be designed to create a learning community of teachers with the purpose of collaborating and creating curriculum that would provide special education students with cohesive learning experiences. Johnston, Allington, and Afflerbach (1985) found that there was incongruence between the instruction in a remedial classroom and the general education classroom. Wonder-McDowell, Reutzel, and Smith (2011) study concluded that providing aligned instruction was beneficial to struggling second graders' reading development. Conducting such a study in various grade levels might provide insight into how a collaborative and cohesive curriculum contributes to student learning and if it helps them apply what they are learning across contexts.

Last, more research is needed regarding how teachers understand their students' out-of-school literacies and how they build upon those literacies. Specifically, this research needs to be conducted with students who struggle or have an identified learning disability. As seen in the findings of this study, and in the research, (i.e., Dudley-Marling,

2004; Triplett, 2007) much of the instruction students with learning disabilities experience were skill-based. Such research could address the questions of how to build on a student's interests and how students use literacy outside of school to enhance their school literacies.

Final thoughts

Many educators wish for students to be successful, want to meet students' academic and social/emotional needs, and want students to have positive self-concepts. I believe most teachers aspire to understand their students and how they learn rather than to see them as labels, which do not provide a complete picture of students' identities. My findings demonstrate that my focal students were more than their labels, that their identities were multidimensional. As I learned working with Collin, his identification as autistic led me to focus on his "within-child deficits" and to lower my expectations (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). Once I realized that my approach was not working, and that he had many uses for and skills related to literacy that were not recognized in school, I began to see him differently. There was so much more to him than the label of autism, and the same was true of Bob, Sam, and Zoe and their label of learning disability. I argue that we need to consider carefully how we label and socially identify students. We need to sit next to students, strive to understand how they learn, and develop relationships of trust with them, so that our focus is on helping students' learn, rather than to identify them as specific types of learners.

Appendix A: Administrator Interview Protocol

1) Tell me about your career in education.

2) Please describe your philosophy of teaching/education.

3) Tell me about your school – the student population, parent involvement, etc.

4) Please describe how your school meets your student population's learning needs.

5) What are your goals for your school? For your students? For your teachers?

6) Tell me about how you convey your expectations to your staff and how you evaluate your staff.

7) Tell me about your perceptions of education for student's labeled struggling or identified as needing special education services.
   a) In what ways, if any, do you see the education of struggling learners or learners with a disability differently than the general population of students?
   b) In your opinion, when does a struggling learner become disabled?
   c) What role does standardized, high-stakes tests play in your perceptions of these students learning and academic growth?
      i) Describe how decisions are made regarding test accommodations – and the implementation of these accommodations throughout the school year.

8) What influences your decisions regarding a student? What influences how your choices? Think about the last time you had a meeting about a student being considered for Special Education, could you please walk me through the process?

9) Please share your thoughts about implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in your school and how you perceive your role in the implementation of RTI and LRE.
   a) Describe how your teachers work in order to implement response to intervention and how is this different – if it is – than before the implementation of RTI.
   b) Describe the professional development for you and your staff - and how is this different – if it is – than before the implementation of RTI.
   c) Describe the referral process and how is it different – if it is – than before the implementation of RTI.
   d) What is next?

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocol One

1. How would you describe your pedagogy/approach/beliefs about teaching literacy (both reading and writing) in your classroom?
2. How do your beliefs fit with the approaches and goals of the school administration?
3. How do you decide, based on what information, to bring a student up for further discussion or special education testing?
4. How do you document student learning?
5. What type of assessments do you use?
6. What do you think an intervention specialist or special education teacher will be able to do for student(s) that you are unable to? How is the instruction they provide different from the instruction provided in your classroom?
7. Could you describe an example of how intervention services or special education services have positively impacted a student's academic, literacy achievement?
8. Let's talk about some of the labels we give students who are experiencing challenges with reading?
    a. What do you think about these labels?
    b. How are they used?
    c. How do you see them affecting students?
9. From your perspective, how do you think labels contribute to how a student thinks of him/herself? Would you please give an example?
10. How do you think labels contribute to how other students think or feel about other students as learners? Would you please give an example?
11. How do you accommodate for the variety of experience, languages, and skills in your teaching of literacy in your classroom?
12. Ok, please tell me about a student who as a _____ label. Please describe a how you have worked with him/her.
13. Describe an example of an instructional strategy that you feel was particularly effective for a struggling or special education student.
14. In what ways do labels and previous teacher views of students influence your way of seeing a student? How do those labels Influence your teaching, if they do?
15. How are students re-integrated into the classroom if they have to leave for special services?

Appendix C: Student Group Discussion Protocol

1. What are you doing/working on?

2. I see that you're doing some reading/writing as part of this activity. What are you reading/writing right now?

3. What would happen if you didn't read or write this?

4. What will you do if you don't know how to read a word or if you read something and it doesn't make sense?

5. What was helpful to your learning today? What could have been more helpful?

6. In what ways will the information you learned today be useful to your own life? In what ways will it not be useful?

Appendix D: Student Interview Protocol One

1. Tell me about what kinds of things you do in (insert teacher's name) classroom with reading/writing.

2. How do the people in your life think about you as a reader? Writer?
    a. How do your (*parents, a classmate's name, other family members*) describe you as a reader? Writer?

3. I noticed that you like to read… What other kinds of things do you read?

4. I noticed that you write about… What other things do you like to write about?

5. I noticed that you seem to really enjoy reading/writing when…Tell me about that.
    a. Are there other times when you really enjoy reading? Writing? Tell me about them.

6. How would you describe yourself as a reader? Writer?

7. Tell me about reading and writing in your classroom? In (*insert reading specialist's name*) classroom? In (*insert special education teacher's name*) classroom?

8. How does (*insert teacher name*) help you with your reading? Writing? What does he/she do that helps your learning the most?

9. How do you think (*insert teacher name*) sees you as a reader? Writer?

10. Tell me about reading/writing at home. How is it different than at school?

Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol Two

1. Please describe a specific student and how you have worked with them.

2. Could you describe an example of how intervention services or special education services have positively impacted a student's academic, literacy achievement?

3. Tell me about how you work with the interventionists and special education teachers.

4. From your perspective, how do you think (*insert a student's name*) think of him/herself as a learner in your classroom?

5. How do you accommodate for the variety of experience, languages, and skills in your teaching of literacy in your classroom?

6. Describe an example of an instructional strategy that you feel was particularly effective for a struggling or special education student.

7. In what ways have students surprised you? Why? Describe an example.

8. How were you prepared – how do you stay current in understanding ways to work with students who struggle or are identified as needing special education services?

Appendix F: Student Interview Protocol Two

1. With the student create a WORDLE using words they use to describe themselves.

2. Tell me about fourth grade. What did you learn? What do you think you improved on? Anything else you want to share about fourth grade?

3. When we first talked you told me…How would you describe yourself as a reader now? Writer? In what ways has this changed since the beginning of the year?

4. When we first talked you told me…How do you think others would describe you as a reader now? Writer?

5. I noticed you were reading/writing…at the beginning of the year, now you are reading/writing…In what ways has this changed since the beginning of the school year?

6. What do you like to read? Write about? In what ways has this changed since the beginning of the school year?

7. How does (*insert teacher name*) help you with your reading? Writing? What does he/she do that helps your learning the most?

8. How do you think (*insert teacher name*) sees you as a reader? Writer? In what ways do you think this has changed since the beginning of the year?

9. Tell me about reading and writing in your classroom? In (*insert reading specialist's name*) classroom? In (*insert special education teacher's name*) classroom? How has this changed since the beginning of the year?

10. Tell me about the STAAR test.
    a. How do you feel about the STAAR tests?
    b. How do you feel about tests in general?
    c. How do you think you did on the STAAR test?
        i. Writing?
        ii. Reading?
        iii. Math?

Appendix G: Interventionist Interview

1. Would you please describe your teaching history.

2. How would you describe your pedagogy/approach/beliefs about teaching literacy (both reading and writing) in your classroom.

3. How were you prepared – how do you stay current in understanding ways to work with students who struggle or are identified as needing special education services.

4. Describe your responsibilities and role at the school.

5. How do your beliefs fit with the approaches and goals of the school administration?

6. Please describe a specific student (xxx) and how you have worked with him.

7. Tell me about how you work with the general education teachers and other teachers you work with.

8. Let's talk about some of the labels we give students who are experiencing challenges with reading?
    a. What do you think about these labels?
    b. How are they used?
    c. How do you see them affecting students?

9. From your perspective, how do you think labels contribute to how a student thinks of him/herself? Would you please give an example?

10. From your perspective, how do you think (*xxxx*) thinks of himself as a learner in your classroom?

11. Describe an example of an instructional strategy that you feel was particularly effective for a struggling or special education student.

12. In what ways have students surprised you? Why? Describe an example.

Appendix H: Administrator Interview Protocol Two

1. Please reflect on the past year. At the beginning of the year you told me about the goals you had for your school, teachers, and students. Tell me about the successes you think you had this year, if you think you met your goals, any challenges that you faced, and if you made changes or adjustments during the year and what they were. Lastly, tell me what your goals are for next year.

Appendix I: Excerpt of Email Request to Write up Student Portrait.

… I would like you to think about each student and write about him/her as a learner in your classroom. I realize that some of these students spend very little time in your classroom, however, I think that each of you know each student very well. I would like you to write a portrait of each kiddo - your first impressions (the beginning of the year) of him/her as a learner to your impressions of him/her now. How do you see him/her as a reader, a writer, a mathematician, and as a learner in science and social studies? How do you think they think of themselves as learners? What adjustments, if any - including accommodations, did you make in your teaching to help each of them? If they were tested for special education this year what were your concerns - how did you discuss them in your meetings - and what were the recommendations that came out of the meetings - before you all agreed that testing was what was needed? How did you advocate for these kiddos - I know that you did - but I want to hear your perspective? What changes occurred because of your advocacy? In addition, anything you know and want to share about their homelife, interests, parental support, etc. Lastly, anything else you can think of that you want to share…

References

Abrams, L. M., Pedulla, J. J., & Madaus, G. F. (2003). Views from the classroom: Teachers' opinions of statewide testing programs. *Theory Into Practice, 42*(1), 18-29.

Allington, R. (1986). Policy constraints and effective compensatory reading instruction: A review. In J. Hoffman (Ed.), *Effective teaching of reading and research and practice* (pp. 261-289). Newark, DE.: International Reading Association.

Alvarez, M. C., Armstrong, S. L., Lish-Piper, L., Matthews, M. W., & Risko, V. J. (2009). Deconstructing the construct of 'struggling reader': Standing still or transforming expectations and instruction? *American Reading Forum Annual Yearbook* (Vol. 29).

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990).

Assaf, L. C. (2008). Professional identity of a reading teacher: Responding to high-stakes testing pressures. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 14*(3), 239-252.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*(2), 117-148.

Barton, D. (2007). *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (Ed.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-15). New York: Routledge.

Bender, W. N., Vail, C. O., Scott, K. (1995). Teachers' attitudes toward increased mainstreaming: Implementing effective instruction for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28*(2), 87-94.

Berkeley, S., Bender, W. N., Peaster, L. G., & Saunders, L. (2009). Implementation of Response to Intervention: A snapshot of progress. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*(2), 85-95.

Blanchett, W. (2010). Telling it like it is: The role of race, class, & culture in the perpetuation of learning disability as a privileged category for the white middle class. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 30*, 6-22.

Bradley, R., Danielson, L., & Doolittle, J. (2005). Response to Intervention. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(6), 485-486.

Brown, K. J., Morris, D., & Fields, M. (2009). Intervention after grade 1: Serving increased numbers of struggling readers effectively. *Journal of Literacy Research, 37*(1), 61-94.

Brownell, M. T., & Pajares, F. (1999). Teacher efficacy and perceived success in mainstreaming students with learning and behavior problems. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 22*(3), 154-164.

Burns, M. K., & Gibbons, K. (2012). *Implementing response-to-intervention in elementary and secondary schools: Procedures to assure scientific-based practices* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Chard, D. J., & Kameenui, E. J. (2000). Struggling first grade readers: The frequency and progress of their reading. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(1), 28-38.

Clarke, M., Shore, A., Rhoades, K., Abrams, L., Miao, J., & Li, J. (2003). *Perceived effects of state-mandated testing programs on teaching and learning: Findings from interviews with educators in low-, medium-, and high-stakes states*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy, Boston College.

Christenson, S. L., Decker, D. M., Triezenberg, H. L., Ysseldyke, J. E., & Reschly, A. (2007). Consequences of high-stakes assessment for student with and without disabilities. *Educational Policy, 21*(4), 662-690.

Cook, B. G., Semmel, M. I., & Gerber, M. M. (1999). Attitudes of principals and special education teachers toward the inclusion of students with mild disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 20*(4), 199-207.

Cox, P. R., & Dykes, M. K. (2001). Effective classroom adaptations for students with visual impairments. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 33*(6), 68-74.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Ed.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago: Aldine.

Dishner, E., & Olson, M. (1987). Dyslexia and the Texas Mandate. *Teacher Education and Practice, 3*(2), 9-14.

Dudley-Marling, C. (2004). The social construction of learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 37*(6), 482-489.

Dweck, C. S. (2000). *Self-Theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. (1988). Social-Cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review, 95*(2), 256-273.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). Public Law 94-142, 20. U.S.C. Sections 1400-1461.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Fairbanks, C. M., & Broughton, M. A. (2002). Literacy lessons: The convergence of expectations, practices, and classroom culture. *Journal of Literacy Research, 34*(4), 391-428.

Fennick, E., & Liddy, D. (2001). Responsibilities and preparation for collaborative teaching: Co-teachers' perspectives. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 24*(3), 229-240.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S. (2006). Introduction to Response to Intervention: What, why, and how valid is it? *Reading Research Quarterly, 41*(1), 93-99.

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., Mathes, P. G., & Simmons, D. C. (1997). Peer assisted learning strategies: Making classrooms more responsive to diversity. *American Educational Research Journal, 34*, 174-206.

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Stecker, P. M. (2010). The "blurring" of special education in a new continuum of general education placements and services. *Exceptional Children, 76*(3), 301-323.

Fuchs, W. W. (2009). Examining teachers' perceived barriers associated with inclusion. *Souteastern Readional Association of Teacher Educators Journal, 19*(1), 30-35.

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Hatt, B. (2012). Smartness as a cultural practice in schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(3), 438-460. doi: 10.3102/0002831211415661

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways With Words: Language, life, and work in communities, and classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Heubert, J. P., & Hauser, R. M. (Eds). (1999). *High-stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, D.C.: National Research Council.

Hughes, C. & Dexter, D. D. (n.d.). Universal screening within a response-to-intervention-model. Retrieved from http://research.pbvusd.k12.ca.us/RTI.Universal%20Screening%20Research.pdf.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (1997).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).

Johnston, P. H. (2011). Response to intervention in literacy: Problems and possibilities. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(4), 511-534.

Johnston, P. H. (2012). *Opening minds: Using language to change lives*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Johnston, P., Allington, R., & Afflerbach, P. (1985). The congruence of classroom and remedial reading instruction. *The Elementary School Journal, 85*(4), 465-477.

Jones, M. G., Jones, B. D., & Hargrove, T. Y. (2003). *The unintended consequences of high-stakes testing*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Kavale, K. A. (2002). Mainstreaming to full inclusion: From orthogenesis of an idea. *International Journal of Educational Research, 49*(2), 201-214. doi: 10.1080/103491220141776

Kershner, R. (2007). What do teachers need to know about meeting special educational needs? In L. Florian (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Special Education* (pp. 486-498). London: SAGE Publications.

Klinger, J., Artilles, A. J., & Barletta, L. M. (2006). English Language Learners who struggle with reading: Language acquisition or LD? *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39*, 108-128.

Lauchlan, F. & Boyle, C. (2007). Is the use of labels in special education helpful? *Support for Learning, 22*(1), 36-42.

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Maloch, B. (2005). Moments by which change is made: A cross-case exploration of teacher mediation and student participation in literacy events. *Journal of Literacy Research, 37*(1), 95-142.

Marshak, L., Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2009). *Peer tutoring with strategic mnemonic instruction in inclusive history classes: Effects for middle school students with and without disabilities*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (1996). Teacher perceptions of mainstreaming/inclusion, 1958-1995: A research synthesis. *Exceptional Children, 63*(1), 59+.

Mastropieri, M. A., Scruggs, T. E., Graetz, J., Norland, J., Gardizi, W., & McDuffie, K. (2005). Case studies in co-teaching in the content areas: Successes, failures, and challenges. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40*(5), 260-270.

Mathes, P. G., Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., Anthony, J. L., Francis, D. J., & Schatschneider, C. (2005). The effects of theoretically different instruction and student characteristics on the skills of struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 40*(2), 148-182.

McCarthey, S. J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 36*(2), 122-151.

McDermott, R. P. (1993). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S. Chaiklan, & Lave, J. (Eds.), *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McDermott, R. P. (1997). Achieving school failure: 1972 – 1977. *Education and cultural process: Anthropological approaches* (3rd ed., pp. 110-135). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

McMaster, K. L., Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Compton, D. L. (2005). Responding to Nonresponders: An experimental field trial of identification and intervention methods. *Exceptional Children, 71*(4), 445-463.

Merriam, S. B., and Associates. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115, Stat. 1425 (2002).

Orelus, P. W., & Hills, M.D. (2010). Rethinking literacy development of bilingual students with special needs: Challenges, struggles and growth. *International Journal of Special Education, 23*, 136-147.

Owocki, G., & Goodman, Y. (2002). *Kidwatching: Documenting children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Poole, D. (2008). Interactional differentiation in the mixed-ability group: A situated view of two struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 43*, 228-250.

Race to the Top Program Executive Summary. (2009). Retrieved from http:www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/fact-sheet-race-top

Rioux, M. (2007). Disability rights in education. In L. Florian (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Special Education* (pp. 107-116). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Risko, V., Walker-Dalhouse, D, & Arragones, A. (2011). The promise of an alternate perspective: Struggling readers through a socio-cultural research lens. In T. Morrison, Martin, L., Boggs, M., Szabo, S., & Haas, L. (Ed.), *The Thirty Third Yearbook of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers* (pp. 187-204). Commerce, Texas: Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Rozalski, M., Miller, J., Stewart, A. (2011). Least Restrictive Environment. In J. M. Kauffman, & D. P. Hallahan (Ed.), *Handbook of Special Education* (pp. 107-119). New York, NY: Routledge.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Sailors, W. (2009). *Making RTI work: How smart schools are reforming education through schoolwide response-to-intervention*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Salomon, G. (1993). No distribution without individuals' cognition: A dynamic interactional view. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions* (pp. 111-138). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Santamaria, L. J. (2009). Culturally responsive differentiated instruction: Narrowing gaps between best pedagogical practices benefiting all learners. *Teachers College Record, 111*(1), 214-247.

Schallert, D. L., & Martin, D. B. (2003). A psychological analysis of what teachers and students do in the language arts classroom. In D. Lapp J. Flood, J.R. Squire, & J. M. Jensen (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed., pp. 31-45). New York: Macmillan.

Schumm, J. S., Vaughn, S., Gordon, J., & Rothlein, L. (1994). General education teachers' beliefs, skills, and practices in planning for mainstreamed students with learning disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 17*(1), 22-27. doi: 10.1177/088840649401700104

Scruggs, T., Mastropieri, M. A., Berkeley, S. L., & Marshak, L. (2010). Mnemonic Strategies: Evidence-Based Practice and Practice-Based Evidence. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 46*(2), 79-86.

Scruggs, T., Mastropieri, M. A., & McDuffie, K. A. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: A Metasynthesis of qualitative research. *Exceptional Children, 73*(4), 392-416.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 34 C.F.R. Part 104.

Shapiro, E. S., Zigmond, N., Wallace, T., & Marston, D. (Eds.). (2011). *Models for implementing response to intervention: Tools, outcomes, and implications*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Sleeter, C. E. (2010). Why is there learning disabilities? A Critical analysis of the birth of the field in its social context. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 30*(2), 210-237.

Smith, N. B. (2002). *American reading instruction* (Special Edition). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Soodak, L. C., Podell, D. M., & Lehman, L. R. (1998). Teacher, student, and school attributes as predictors of teachers' responses to inclusion. *The Journal of Special Education, 31*(4), 480-497.

Spencer, T. G. (2009). Complicating what it means to "struggle": One young child's experience with a mandate literacy initiative. *Contemporary issues in early childhood, 10*, 218-231.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Stanovich, P. J., & Jordan, A. (1998). Canadian teachers' and principals' beliefs about inclusive education as predictors of effective teaching in heterogeneous classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal, 98*(3), 221-238.

Steeves, K. A., Hodgeson, J., & Peterson, P. (2002). Are we measuring student success with high-stakes testing? *Educational Forum, 66*, 228-235.

Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. V. (2005). At last: Recent applications of new literacy studies in educational contexts. *Research in the Teaching of English, 39*(4), 417-423.

Stuebing, K. K., Fletcher, J. M., LeDoux, J. M., Lyon, G. R., Shaywitz, S. E., & Shaywitz, B. A. (2002). Validity of IQ-Discrepancy classifications of reading disabilities: A meta-analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(2), 469-518.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative reserach: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage.

The brochure *Response to Intervention: Guiding principals for educators from the International Reading Association* (2010). In International Reading Association (Ed.). Neward, DE: International Reading Association.

The dyslexia handbook: Procedures concerning dyslexia and related disorders. (2014). Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency

The New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60-92.

Trent, S. C., Artiles, Alfredo J., & Englert, C. S. (1998). From Deficit Thinking to Social Constructivism: A Review of Theory, Research, and Practice in Special Education. *Review of Research in Education, 23*, 277-307.

Triplett, C. F. (2007). The social construction of "struggle": Influences of school literacy contexts, curriculum, and relationships. *Journal of Literacy Research, 39*(1), 95-126.

U.S. Office of Education. (1977). Assistance to states for education for handicapped children: Procedures for evaluating specific learning disabilities. *Federal Register, 42,* G1082–G1085.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Briefing. (2007). Retrieved from www.usccr.gov.

Valencia, S. W., & Buly, M. R. (2004). Behind test scores: What struggling readers *really* need. *The Reading Teacher, 57*(6), 520-531.

Wonder-McDowell, C., Reutzel, D. R., & Smith, J. A. (2011). Does instructional alignment matter? *The Elementary School Journal, 112*(2), 259-279.

Woolfson, L. M., & Brady, K. (2009). An investigation of factors impacting on mainstream teachers' beliefs about teaching students with learning difficulties. *Educational Psychology, 29*(2), 221-238. doi: 10.1080/01443410802708895

Wortham, S. (2004). The interdependence of social identification and learning. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(3), 715-750.

Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification and academic learning*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Worthy, J., Consalvo, A. L., Bogard, T., & Russell, K. W. (2012). Fostering academic and soial growth in a primary literacy workshop classroom: "Restorying" students with negative reputations. *The Elementary School Journal, 112*(4), 568-589.

Yell, M. L., & Crockett, J. B. (2011). Free appropriate public education. In J. M. Kauffman, & D. P. Hallahan (Ed.), *Handbook of Special Education* (pp. 77-90). New York, NY: Routledge.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Designs and Methods* (4 ed. Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research; Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sate Publications, Inc.

Youman, M., & Mather, N. (2013). Dyslexia laws in the USA. *Annals of Dyslexia, 63*(2), 133-153. doi: 10.1007/s11881-012-0076-2

Children's Literature

Bunting, E. (1991). *Fly Away Home*. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York.

Collins, S. (2008). *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic: New York.

Lupica, M. *Comeback Kids Series*. Puffin Books: New York.

Mattern, J. *Sharing a Dream*. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York.

Munson. D. (2000). *Enemy Pie*. Chronicle Books LLC: San Francisco, CA.

Neitzel S., & Parker N. W. (1994). *The Jacket I Wear in the Snow*. Tien Wah Press: Singapore

Peirce, L. *Big Nate Series*. Andrews McMeel Publishing: Kansas City.

Sachar, L. (1987). *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*. Random House Children's Books: New York.

Sloan, H. G. (2013). *Counting by 7's*. Penguin Group: New York.

Weisner, D. (2011). *Tuesday*. Clarion Books: New York

Van Allsburg, C. (1988). *Two Bad Ants*. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York.

Picture

Page from *The Jacket I Wear In The Snow*, by Shirley Neitzel and Nancy Winslow Parker. (1994) Retrieved from http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-jHjs82-zD44/VMge7gVZBOI/AAAAAAAAPiE/5f0EfYS7PsY/s1600/IMG_5137.jpg